

# THE SCORE

A MUSIC MAGAZINE

Editor: William Glock

Number 12, June 1955

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1969

# THE SCORE

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# THE SCORE

## and I.M.A. magazine

*no measurewise accent; accent by melodic rhythm only*

(30)

fl. *God dwelling up in heav—en send me a true*

V. *God dwelling up in heav—en send me a true*

P. *God dwelling up in heav—en send me a true*

vc *God dwelling up in heav—en send me a true*

(35)

knight Lord Christ with a steel sword bright, broad & trenchant

(40)

Yea, & seven leagues from hit to point O Lord! & let the

(45)

hand of his sword be gold on silver, Lord in heaven, such a

(50)

Five Shillings

June 1955

Editor: WILLIAM GLOCK



COVER MANUSCRIPT is a page from Lou Harrison's *Scene* from William Morris, for mezzo-soprano with flute, pianoforte, harp, violin, viola and 'cello. It is reproduced by permission of the Southern Music Publishing Co., Inc. The flute part is to be played an octave higher than written, the pianoforte part is doubled two octaves higher, and is marked 'semi-staccato, without accent or pedal'.

According to present plans, the September issue will include the second part of David Drew's study of Messiaen (begun last December); articles by Marc Wilkinson, on Edgard Varèse, and by Pierre Boulez, on Electronic Music; a tribute to Georges Enesco, by Yehudi Menuhin; two articles on Aleksandr Helmann—one on his pianoforte playing, by Klaus Egge, the other on his teaching, by Margaret Stevenson; and a large section of News and Comments.

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The Spring 1955 issue is now available, with the following contents:

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*Entrance Hall of the I.M.A.*



# THE SCORE

## AND I.M.A. MAGAZINE

Editor: William Glock

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Number 12, June 1955

## COMMENT

Though America may not yet have produced any music to compare with its greatest achievements in literature and architecture, some of us have long been aware that music is a vital field of creative activity on the other side of the Atlantic, and have long deplored the fact that the results of this activity are so little known to us. Hardly any scores are available here, hardly any records; and performances are few and far between. One might think that the radio would help; but during the four years from 1950 to 1953, the Third Programme devoted just slightly more time to the whole of American music than to Poulenc alone. Moreover, half the sixty-odd performances were of works by Barber and Copland.

The present issue does not pretend to give a balanced view of the whole of American music, but it does try to take notice of a large variety of techniques and aspirations. There is no need to explain that in planning an issue of this kind, certain things are apt to go astray; promises may be forgotten, assignments accepted and then transformed into brilliant essays on totally unexpected lines. Thus two or three important figures have, I am sorry to say, been almost completely passed over. Others (such as Charles Ives and Aaron Copland) do not appear in chapter headings but play nevertheless a prominent part in several different contexts.

It will be noticed that certain articles are apparently intended rather for European readers than for Americans, or vice versa. This depends sometimes on my own requests, sometimes on the attitude that individual authors have thought it important to establish in the circumstances. Thus the opening article by Henry Cowell gives perspective, and is addressed mainly to non-Americans; Arthur Berger's, on the other hand, is not only an account of a certain group of American composers but also a courageous manifesto whose impact will be felt mainly at home.

The unhappy isolation of many composers in the United States is suggested more than once in the following pages. Whilst we in England stand amazed, for example, at the activities of the Louisville Orchestra (which commissions and records an average of three contemporary works a month), we should not forget that there is another side to the story: the 'Boards of Directors' mentioned by Milton Babbitt, or the almost fanatical publicity that has recently been devoted, so I understand, to a book by Henry Pleasants called *The Agony of Modern Music*; a book which begins by announcing that 'Serious music is a dead art', and ends by showing us a composer slinking from the Carnegie Hall and making his way to 'the livelier blandishments of a jam session'.

Despite fashions and theories and million-dollar propaganda, however, there will always be musicians who concern themselves only with expressing the best that is in them, and in terms that encourage us to look more and more deeply into what it is that they have communicated. And I believe, indeed I am sure, that amongst these musicians are many whose names appear in the present issue.

W.G.



## THE FLAVOUR OF AMERICAN MUSIC

*Henry Cowell*

Music written by an American is American music; but since music-writing Americans or their ancestors have all of them come from Europe, there is hardly any such thing as American music that is entirely independent of the European tradition. Nevertheless, a great deal of it has its own characteristic flavour or flavours.

During Haydn's lifetime, William Billings of Boston wrote hymns, anthems and fuguing tunes for the use of his singing school. There were others in New England, such as Swan and Edson, who sometimes wrote even more forcefully; but Billings has become the best known of this group. The music was positive and singable, and was probably derived by ear from English models; but it contained at times open fifths, consecutive fifths and octaves, doubled thirds and modal cadences. Conventional rules of harmony were brought to Billings's attention (well after his personal manner was formed) but he rejected them. One finds an individual American flavour especially in his fuguing tunes, though they are clearly related to English imitative practice. They usually consist of stretto-like imitations, but sometimes the answering melodies are quite different from the original subjects—a series of entrances of related but separate melodies.

Billings became discredited when conventional harmony began to be widely taught in America, and even some fairly recent texts refer to his music as ugly or crude; but wide-spread hymn-writing with open fifths and modal manner spread in the early nineteenth century through the Southern mountains, and groups of folk singers gather even now in 'big sings' to sing them.<sup>1</sup> These hymn composers are still further removed from European influence than Billings; their style is more strongly American-flavoured. William Walker, author and compiler of *Southern Harmony*, is perhaps the most original of this group.

The later nineteenth century produced little new in American flavour, but Edward MacDowell, whose music was in fact very similar to that of *avant-garde* Europeans of the same period, liked American titles; and since in those days it was the fashion to judge music by its title or programme, MacDowell gained a reputation for being American.

Folk songs have been brought to America from all over the world. Those in foreign languages have tended to remain somewhat the same, and not to mix very

<sup>1</sup> See article on *The Shaped-Note Singers*, by Sidney Robertson Cowell (page 9 of this issue).



greatly. The ones from the British Isles, however, have undergone what is probably a profound change in manner of performance (I doubt whether Elizabeth II would recognize an Elizabethan ballad as sung by a Tennessee mountain man), and also some mixture. Irish, Scottish and English songs, originally quite different in style, have in many cases been mixed in such a way as to produce an authentic American flavour as they are heard in America.

Until recently, these songs played little part in cultivated American music; but now many composers draw on them and their style as source material. When this happens, they start out, not with the style of any one of the peoples of the British Isles, but with at least a partial integration of them all; and since the songs have been in America for several centuries, they have also undergone other natural changes in development which add to the American flavour. It is the integration of foreign elements, however, that seems the most characteristic American contribution.

After the Anglo-Celtic-American integration, that of the Afro-American seems the most wide-spread. Negroes have built up a special musical world in the United States, with its own manner of singing (as in spirituals and blues) and playing (leading to ragtime and jazz); all the same, its connexion with native African music is rather limited. The basic tunes all show white influence; many white and negro spirituals have the same melodic foundation, and blues are based on white man's chords—a set succession of dominant sevenths in related keys.

As cultivated music was introduced into America during the nineteenth century, the main influences were German-Austrian symphonies, songs, chamber works, and theory; and Italian opera. In addition, nearly all children learned French nursery tunes. The American symphonists of the late nineteenth century Boston school—Foote, Chadwick, Converse and Gilbert—patterned themselves on the German romantics, mixing Wagner, Schumann and Brahms. Folk music played no part (it was hardly looked upon as music at all), and composers acquired their technical training in Europe.

From this situation Charles Ives emerged. He was born and raised in and about Danbury, Connecticut, studied with a father who tended to enjoy musical experiment and to discount German pedantry, and in Yale University, where he learned European styles and forms; but he never went to Europe to study. It is noteworthy that he felt free to compose songs with German, French, Italian and Latin texts as well as many with English and American; and in accordance with the texts, he employed elements of the German, French, Italian and (perhaps) English styles. In his larger chamber and symphonic works he experimented with atonality, polytonality and rhythmical complexes in many cases before similar developments occurred in Europe (his most productive creative period was about 1897 to 1915); and while Teutonic and French influences play a certain part, by far the greatest underlying factor is his use and development of music as sung and played by the simple people surrounding him. He was fond of using old hymn tunes, and simple composed melodies such as those

of Stephen Foster, or *Juanita*, or *When You and I Were Young, Maggie*, and patriotic tunes such as *Columbia*, the *Gem of the Ocean*, or *Marching Through Georgia*. He never quoted exactly; rather he drew characteristic elements from these things into his own complex fabric. Even when he created his extensive *Concord Sonata* for piano using the main motif of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony as his own main motif throughout, he made this serve to express the transcendentalism of Concord philosophers; and the music sounds American, with little hint of German style. Ives's music therefore contained unique, self-created means, built from the musical practice of those surrounding him; and inasmuch as his music was related to Europe, it represented a use of all the European styles with which he was familiar. Thus his music has many American flavours instead of only one taste.

In Europe, national styles still tend to be quite separate, and members of one group often fight the musical values of another with bitterness. The fact that in Paris such men as Leibowitz follow Schoenberg and the 12-tone row does not mean an integration of French and Viennese styles; it means only that Leibowitz and his group form a pool of Viennese style geographically situated in France, and that they react vigorously against the modal diatonicism of the French school; and members of the latter group view chromaticism with horror.

In America of recent years perhaps the most subtle flavour has been produced by integration in different proportions of elements that in Europe would be considered irreconcilable. Some Americans have studied with Nadia Boulanger and write in French style; some have studied with Hindemith and write in Teutonic style. But some, quite naturally and perhaps unconsciously integrate these views and practices. One thinks of such a man as Walter Piston. No single element in his music is drawn from American sources, yet because of this integration it has an American flavour. The music of Roger Sessions is an almost perfect combination of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. The chromaticism of Carl Ruggles is without doubt Teutonic in essence, but was built up personally and laboriously in America; and the Teutonic chromaticism of Wallingford Riegger is integrated with a use of secundal chords characteristic of American style since the early twentieth century. Virgil Thomson is able to compose a *Hymn-tune Symphony* related to his experience as organist in Kansas City, and a series of French-style impressionistic orchestral pieces without integration; but in his *Louisiana Story* he integrates folk material of the 'Cajuns, who have been French-speaking natives of Louisiana for hundreds of years, with modern Parisian treatment, and creates a Franco-American combination with a new flavour. Aaron Copland tends towards French style and philosophy, but has made some sort of integration of jazz elements in his *Jazz Concerto*, uses Anglo-American tunes in *Appalachian Spring*, and Spanish-Indian-American tunes in *El Salon Mexico*. Roy Harris combines a development of the French approach to counterpoint with a Beethovenesque approach to form, and sometimes integrates these with American folk tunes.

I myself, as a composer, am not consciously concerned with an American flavour; yet I believe that my interests have led me towards having some such flavours in my

music. For one thing, I grew up and was musically educated in California, and gathered no sense of the European tradition as being the only possible path to follow in the development of music. I felt quite free to create my own points of departure and my own means, and to remain true to my own musical philosophy without particular reference to European rules or history. My early much-publicized 'tone-clusters' were, of course, nothing more nor less than secundal chords; and it is of interest that during the first twenty years of this century, Ives, Charles Seeger, Leo Ornstein and I developed a wide use of such chords quite independently, while in Europe their use was uncommon, sporadic, and unorganized. About 1940 I became better acquainted with the music of the Billings school, and somewhat later with Walker and the Southern folk hymns. I asked myself the question: 'What would happen if this sort of music were used as a basis for a new style?' The answer has resulted in my writing ten hymns and fuguing tunes, and incorporating some of the same elements into sonatas and symphonies. This is not an imitation of the early style, but a new style which has developed out of it, more or less by-passing European romanticism.

Others, such as Otto Luening, Randall Thompson and William Schuman have also at times felt the pull of the Billings school.

I seem at present to be engaged in integrating my style as developed from Billings and Walker with the American-style integration of European elements, including the neo-modalism of France, the dissonant chromaticism of Austria, tetrachordal folk elements as in Bartók, and Afro-Spanish folk elements. In addition I find myself strongly drawn towards the music of the rest of the world—from Asia, Africa and the South Seas. It is my feeling that, without eclecticism, philosophies (as witness the music of John Cage) and musical practice (as witness the music of Colin McPhee), may be introduced simply and naturally into Western music, and that America with its large African and Oriental population is the natural place for this to begin.

Signs that it *has* already begun may indeed be found, and with these signs, new American musical flavours.



## THE 'SHAPED-NOTE SINGERS' AND THEIR MUSIC

*Sidney Robertson Cowell*

The oldest surviving and most widespread musical tradition in the United States is the body of folk hymnody that was circulated by the singing schools, in which older folk music was adapted to eighteenth century religious poetry.

Most of the eighteenth century American instruction books in the art of singing at sight used the British 4-syllable system (fa-sol-la, fa-sol-la-mi) which was derived from the tetrachordal organization of the modes. Additional visual assistance was later given the singers by varying the shape of the note-heads to correspond with the syllables that established the relative pitch.

The idea of giving each note a shape—a square, a diamond, a triangle, and so on, to indicate its position in relation to the tonic, was for a long time credited to the American, Andrew Law. It now appears to have been used a few years earlier by Messrs. Smith and Little, in a volume that was printed in Philadelphia in 1798; but it would not be surprising to find, as a matter of fact, that the idea had an earlier history in Great Britain. The notes are placed on the five-line staff as we 'round-noters' are accustomed to see them, the various shapes hollow or filled, with or without flags on the stems, to indicate metric values in the usual way. Appearing as they did at a time when the 7-note scale system and its syllables had begun to displace the modal music, the shaped notes made it unnecessary to worry singers with the twenty-four keys and their signatures, which in any case have no bearing on the way the melodic outlines sound. As a device for facilitating the reading of music at sight, Smith and Little's 'new patent notes' were an immediate and immense success. Incredible as it may seem, hundreds of thousands of copies of shaped-note collections of religious songs were put into circulation between 1800 and the end of the Civil War in 1864, and a few of them are still being printed in large editions. The 'longboys' or 'longways song books' (so called because of their characteristic shape, which was wider than it was high), bore names like *Christian Harmony*, *Hesperian Harp*, *Kentucky Harmony*, *Sacred Harp*, *Southern Harmony*, *Harp of Columbia* and so on, and one hears the practitioners of this music referred to as 'Harmony Singers' or 'Singers in the Harp' from the names of their books. The older tradition of four shapes and four syllables has survived among the groups that use the *Sacred Harp* (1844) collection in the Deep South, and it is sometimes revived elsewhere when a few oldsters gather to sing out of their battered copies of the *Southern Harmony* (1835) in a Kentucky

town. Such groups call themselves 'fasola singers', in contrast to the majority who now learn many of the same songs from books printed in seven shapes, not four.

These old singing-school books all begin with a few highly condensed pages on the rudiments of music, usually in question-and-answer form, with sometimes a round or a couple of exercises for practice. The songs are uniformly religious in temper, and are divided into three sections: church music, singing-school music, and anthems. The anthem section frequently includes fuguing tunes (sometimes spelled, and often pronounced 'fudging' tunes). The volumes were distributed by travelling singing-school masters who were also the editors or compilers and arrangers. One such personality, William Walker, whose teaching carried him from South Carolina to Kentucky and back again, was responsible for the most famous of the four-shape books, and he was accustomed to follow his signature with the proud letters A.S.H. (Author, *Southern Harmony*).

Until the middle of the nineteenth century the harmonic settings were in three parts, the melody in the middle voice, with a descant part above and a bass part below it.<sup>1</sup> When American musicians trained in Germany returned to make four-part harmony fashionable in city churches, the old rural singing-school collections began to be revised and an alto part was added between the high voice and the melody, without otherwise changing anything. This brought it about that one famous old singing-master had engraved on his tombstone: 'Composer of 397 altos'.

The harmonic settings in the shaped-note collections have a rather rough and ready air on paper, full of what were at one time considered to be mistakes in harmony: consecutive fifths and octaves, incomplete chords (omitting the third degree) and so on. This very unconventionality, however, stemmed from a fine feeling for the sound of massed voices that has given us a vigorous and original choral tradition. The actual singing has an astonishing intense resonance, unsuspected by the eye, because the custom is for men and women to sing all the parts, producing so full and broad an octave doubling that the frequently-omitted thirds of certain chords are never missed. You simply choose the part you like best and sing it 'up' if you are a woman, 'down' if you are a man. The melody, under this system of free enterprise, may win out in numbers and so be reasonably audible, or it may not; the treble, and sometimes even the bass may attract more singers than the other parts. As individual singers like to sing one part today and another next week, there is nothing fixed about the 'orchestration'.

The fuguing tunes<sup>2</sup> were real compositions in the more usual sense, although traditional fragments sometimes crept into them too. The name of William Billings

<sup>1</sup> See *Wondrous Love*, on opposite page. This is one of the most widely sung shaped-note hymns; it is still printed in the *New Harp of Columbia* in only three parts, no alto having been added.

<sup>2</sup> *Northfield*, on opposite page, is a good example of a brief fuguing tune. For those readers who are disturbed by the apparently conflicting use of shapes in *Northfield* and *Wondrous Love*, the explanation is that the system of 7 shapes worked like tonic-solfa for major and minor, and a modal tune was usually considered minor and given its shapes accordingly. Thus *Wondrous Love* begins on 'la' as a 'minor' tune; i.e. 'la' is the tonic and 'doh' is the third of the scale.

## WONDROUS LOVE

What wondrous love is this, oh! my soul! oh! my soul! What wondrous love is this, oh! my soul! What wondrous love is

this! That caused the Lord of bliss, To bear the dread-ful curse for my soul, for my soul, To bear the dread-ful curse for my soul.

## NORTHFIELD

How long, dear Sa - viour, Oh! how long shall this bright hour de - - lay! Fly

Fly swift a - round, ye wheels of time. And bring the pro - mised day.

Fly swift a - round, ye wheels of time. . . . . And bring the pro - mised day.

swift a - round, ye wheels of time, And bring the pro - mised day, And bring the pro - mised day.

wheels of time. Fly swift a - round, ye wheels of time And bring the pro - mised day



seems inextricably attached to the fuguing tune, but other American 'primitive' composers were writing such pieces at about the same time. The investigations of Irving Lowens have shown that the fuguing style in the music of early American composers was honorably descended from earlier English 'fuges'. Moreover, tunes arranged for a rather similar kind of innocent brief imitation in two other parts were printed in Scotland in 1635. Like most of the roving singing-school masters, William Billings of Boston was a part-time musician: he was a tanner, a crotchety, enthusiastic dynamo of a man, who cultivated his garden so well that a community chorus which began as one of his singing-school classes (at Stoughton, Mass.) is still going on. He compiled several excellent singing-school collections (which antedate the period of printing with shaped notes); at least one of them was engraved by Paul Revere. They all contain a number of compositions of his own which might not have seemed so crude to later critics if these latter had had any idea that the music, however different from Bach and Handel, was not simply the haphazard 'invention' of an untutored enthusiast.

The music of nineteenth century shaped-note singers preserved (or reverted to—we cannot always be sure which) a number of much older musical practices, such as the bare harmonies, the modal melodic forms, the uninflected instrumental tone quality, the imitative devices. And one can also find embedded in it many actual folk tunes. When Martin Luther remarked that it was a pity the devil should have all the good tunes, the way was opened for the adoption of secular tunes with changed texts for religious use, and it was in just this way that Luther himself built up the wonderful body of German Chorales that were the first music of the Reformation. When John Wesley, founder of British Methodism, took over this idea, he missed the real point, however, for he circulated Luther's German folk tunes among the British under the impression that Church music was thus solidly anchored in the 'Music of the People'. This became the basis for the music of the city churches in the United States, of whatever Protestant denomination.

Meanwhile various groups of dissenters in Wales and England, the rebels against entrenched Protestantism in any form, had begun to circulate religious words for use with familiar British folk tunes. It seems to have been during the religious revival of the eighteenth century, the 'new awakening' that was preached across the United States by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1753) and George Whitefield (1714-1770), that this music was established in America from England. Most of the tunes, or variants of them, were already here, circulating with secular words. They can still be found attached to British folk ballads and love songs; some of them are even current as dance tunes. As folk hymnody, this music was carried by the Calvinist revival fires first to New England, then south to Virginia and South Carolina, and 'west' to Tennessee and Kentucky. A little later the singing schools and their printed collections of the same folk music were to travel the same route.

The singing-schools have been traced back into the first quarter of the eighteenth century in New England, and although they are now rare, it is possible still to find

them in session in various parts of the South and the West—ordinarily after the harvest in late Autumn, or between cultivating and haying, in midsummer. Itinerant singing masters lead sessions that used to take three hours every evening for a month, but that now last usually no more than two weeks. Whole families attend together year after year, parents, children and grandchildren, for a fee (at least until recently) of one dollar a head for each session. Many singers feel their way into the music just by joining their family or their neighbours and standing next to a good singer on their chosen part. But the real preservers and perpetuators of the tradition have been the singing schools. The lessons of one singing-school master in the Ozarks around 1925 were transcribed *verbatim* by Vance Randolph and may be found in his *Ozark Mountain Folks* (New York, Vanguard Press, 1932).

In many New England communities singing classes were first organized to improve the singing in church, which was frequently very bad; and the texts were always religious verse. But the meetings were sometimes held in the taverns which were often the only available space to house them, and the music itself seems never to have been identified with church-going. Today many thousands of people meet on one or two Sunday afternoons a month to sing from the old shaped-note collections. Such meetings are announced at the church services held by all the Protestant denominations around the countryside, and they bring together anywhere from twenty-five to two hundred people of many small dissenting sects and of all ages, in a kind of musical prayer meeting. Once a year, all the pupils of a single singing master who has travelled through three States may gather for a 'singing convention' or a 'big singing', as at Blowing Rock in North Carolina, where a thousand people sometimes camp out and sing all day for two or three days. And smaller family groups may meet on an occasional weekday evening to sing from the old books in private homes.

Today none of this music in its older religious form seems to be current in New England, so far as we know, and the comfortable rural singing schools have entirely died out there, having been replaced by numerous fine local choruses and conservatories of music. But an occasional hymn of this style turns up from time to time in New York and New Jersey. Farther South, however, and in the middle and far western United States, thousands of shaped-note books are in use today, although comparatively little of the music is of the sturdy traditional sort found in the pre-Civil War shaped-note books. The pamphlet collections of hymns used by many revivalist sects (Holiness, Holy Roller, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, and so on) are still printed in shaped-notes. The songs are partly the much simplified and repetitive camp meeting hymns, with their responsive exclamations, and bits and pieces of the most popular of the very old songs are recognizable among them. The pamphlets also now contain many more sentimental 'modern' songs. The pace, after having slowed down during the nineteenth century, has now speeded up again considerably. There is often a syncopated piano accompaniment with the improvised 'breaks' of jazz between stanzas, and the music as a whole has incorporated many aspects of popular Broadway or hill-billy dance styles, echoing 1910 ragtime and

revelling in barbershop harmony. It is printed in what the singers call 'quartette' form—the melody having moved out of the tenor into the soprano, to be sung by women alone.

A great devotee of this music and its most famous student was George Pullen Jackson, who died recently in Tennessee at an advanced age. His five books about these 'white spirituals' are full of the most fascinating information. In addition, the bibliographical studies of Irving and Violet Lowens have made it possible to trace the consistent spread of this music and to identify its origins, and these scholars have further discovered and identified compositions by eighteenth century American composers of real interest, who had been known before either not at all or else only by name.

#### AMERICAN COMPOSERS MENTIONED IN THIS ISSUE

		<i>born</i>			<i>born</i>
William Billings	1746–1880	Massachusetts	Elliott Carter	1908–	New York
Lewis Edson	1748–1820	Massachusetts	Samuel Barber	1910–	Pennsylvania
Timothy Swan	1758–1842	Massachusetts	William Schuman	1910–	New York
William Walker	1809– ?	South Carolina	Charles Jones	1910–	Canada
Stephen Foster	1826–1864	Pennsylvania	Carl Menotti	1911–	Milan
Arthur Foote	1853–1937	Massachusetts	Richard Goldman	1911–	New York
George Chadwick	1854–1931	Massachusetts	Ingolf Dahl	1912–	Sweden
Edward MacDowell	1861–1908	New York	Arthur Berger	1912–	New York
Henry Gilbert	1868–1928	Massachusetts	John Cage	1912–	Los Angeles
Frederick Converse	1871–1940	Massachusetts	Kurt List	1913–	Vienna
Charles Ives	1874–1954	Connecticut	Henry Brant	1913–	Canada
Carl Ruggles	1876–	Massachusetts	Morton Gould	1913–	New York
Wallingford Riegger	1885–	Georgia	Alexei Haieff	1914–	Russia
Edgard Varèse	1885–	Paris	Irving Fine	1914–	Massachusetts
Adolph Weiss	1891–	Baltimore	Vincent Persichetti	1915–	Philadelphia
Eduard Steuermann	1892–	Lvov	Robert Palmer	1915–	New York
Walter Piston	1894–	Maine	George Perle	1915–	New York
Roger Sessions	1896–	Brooklyn	Milton Babbitt	1916–	Philadelphia
Virgil Thomson	1896–	Missouri	Ben Weber	1916–	Missouri
Henry Cowell	1897–	California	Lou Harrison	1917–	Oregon
Roy Harris	1898–	Oklahoma	Leonard Bernstein	1918–	Massachusetts
George Gershwin	1898–1937	Brooklyn	Harold Shapero	1920–	Massachusetts
Randall Thompson	1899–	New York	John Lessard	1920–	New York
Aaron Copland	1900–	Brooklyn	Leo Smit	1921–	Philadelphia
Otto Luening	1900–	Milwaukee	Lukas Foss	1922–	Berlin
Colin McPhee	1901–	Montreal	Peter Mennin	1923–	Pennsylvania
Marc Blitzstein	1905–	Philadelphia	Morton Feldman	1926–	New York
Jacques de Menasce	1905–	Austria	Earle Brown	1926–	Massachusetts
Louise Talma	1906–	New York	Christian Wolff	1934–	Nice

We were unfortunately unable to find details in time for Robert Erickson, Robert Evett, Erich Itor Kahn, Richard Maxfield, Jacques Monod, Conlon Nancarrow, Dika Newlin, Keith Robinson, George Rochburg and Julius Schloss.



## CARL RUGGLES

*Lou Harrison*

When I first encountered in the San Francisco Public Library Music Department, many years ago, the volume containing *Men and Mountains* and *Portals*, bound together with their brilliant magenta and green New Music covers, I was instantly aware that while this music was in the chromatic dissonant style and showed a certain resemblance to Berg and Schoenberg whose music I already knew, it also held something rare, something different from these others in its long, continuous, really vocal counterpoints.

Its special form of polyphony instantly gave off a freshness, a lift, that made the familiar materials of dissonant counterpoint seem new and right at the same time. To my present ear that counterpoint still has a fresh, singing sound that seems right and reasonable.

What is the difference in the material or procedure that makes for the flavour of the Ruggles idiom? Certainly that flavour dominates every page of Ruggles and lingers by reminiscence in the hearing of Schoenberg and Berg who are perhaps closer to him in sound than any other composers. It stamps Ruggles's music with a character and expression as strongly as does the Handel stamp denote his music. And it is largely the same gift in Ruggles and Handel; the gift for texture.

Surely no other composer has had to such an intense degree the feel for the register and placing of the individual notes of a chord as Handel. In him the resonance and resilience of the tonal language were at a pitch of sensitivity seldom reached. The grandeur of his scores rises in sound to a drama and brilliance that are hardly compatible with the minimum common notes that constitute the scores.

So in Ruggles one hears a resonance and texture that surprise, in view of the notes which go to make them. Schoenberg, in the *Five Orchestral Pieces* and in the orchestral songs employs a nearly related type of dissonant counterpoint, but his closer spaced, more opaque texture is an entirely different sound from this open and bright placing. It is difficult, indeed, to think of any other contemporary whose ears have directed him in quite so special a channel of resonance as Ruggles. The sonorities give off a brilliance, they perpetuate themselves, are free-floating, connect themselves with Purcell and Handel especially in their allegiance to material beauty of idiom. Instead of shouting their philosophic intent from every semiquaver, they presume we know that music is artificial and man-made from the start; they do nothing but sound resonant and free, as all good chords properly should.

But there is in this texture a more important and more fascinating element. It lies in the polyphony.

Ruggles began the major portion of his creative life with the composition of an opera on the subject of *The Sunken Bell*. In this work (which has a definite correspondence to the *Gurrelieder* in Schoenberg's development) Ruggles begins as a post-Brahmsian, covers the technical field between Debussy and early Schoenberg and ends up with almost the full range of his mature style. During the course of this steady development, his especially clear type of counterpoint begins to take shape and in *Angels* (in 1921) it appears in all its nakedness, fully felt, fully deployed.

It is characterised by an absolute lack of negative spacing in the voices, which is to say that no voice is ever given over to repetitious arpeggiation or figuration of any kind at all. Each voice is a real melody, bound into a community of singing lines, living a life of its own with regard to phrasing and breathing, careful not to get ahead or behind in its rhythmic co-operation with the others, and sustaining a responsible independence in the whole polyphonic life.

This sounds like a description of any good contrapuntal piece, and indeed it is, the kind of contrapuntal piece that hasn't really been written by a first-rate master since Purcell or Bach. And for this reason it is exciting and important.

If other composers of our day have written more flexible tone relations, more exploratory instrumental combinations, more expanded forms, or more personal expressions, surely no one has solved so valiantly and with such a brilliant measure of success the obvious problem of a genuine and integral counterpoint in the present style. For this alone Ruggles's works and reputation are ultimately assured.

'To Carl Ruggles, there are not different kinds of beauty; there is only one kind, and that he prefers to call the "Sublime".' Charles Seeger's analysis in the *Musical Quarterly* for Oct., 1932, of the means by which Ruggles arrives at his 'sublime' expression points out the especially polyphonic character of his technique and draws attention to the elevated, reflective purpose of his music.

The quality of sublimity which Ruggles professes as his desideratum is surely native to the spirit of great religious or philosophic composition in any age. Indeed sublimity was never more of the essence than in our own time when such terrors as *The Lord's Prayer* by Mallote are abroad on the face of the earth. Sublimity in the sense of an elevated, individual, new, explorative, serious adventure on the edge of faith; sublimity in this sense Ruggles aims towards, and to a great measure sets forth.

Mr. Seeger in the aforementioned article also makes the observation that in Ruggles's works—'Of all the many factors in the technique of music—only the repeated note is organized'. To this I must take exception. In fact the novice who was simply presented with one of the pieces to study would first of all notice that the counterpoint existed in a high state of planned purity. He would eventually get

around to the observation that a particular note does not usually return until seven or eight have intervened, but he would surely notice also that the whole layout of the piece with regard to phrase and form was shapely and clear. He might even notice that the rhythm is complementary in effect to the nature of the polyphony.

As a matter of fact one can point to Ruggles as one of a very few United States composers whose work exhibits an equilibrium between the disparate elements of which a piece is made. Let me make this clearer.

An examination of the larger part of serious art composition during this century will disclose the following facts:

For the first time in our music the intervals of the major and minor second have been welcomed as consonant on the downbeat, have, indeed, been made (along with the fifths) a fundamental basis of counterpoint. Whichever way it has happened, we have seen a rapid accession of interest in polyphony and a simultaneous adoption of the closer intervals as organizing members. This has happened after almost two centuries of the homophonic heresy during which the contrapuntal techniques languished, indeed, almost disappeared.

In his book on *New Musical Resources* Henry Cowell remarks on this lapse in contrapuntal practice in the following way: 'Perhaps the reason for this arrest in development is that Bach's practice was so poised between consonance as a basis and what was felt to be dissonance, that it seemed as though any further progress in the one inevitable direction would result in an actual shifting, away from the base of consonant harmony, on to that of frank dissonance; and from the boldness of such a step musicians instinctively hold back'.

Both Bach and Purcell, of course, hovered over just such a step, and it is probably true, as Mr. Cowell suggests, that the immediate decline in polyphonic thought evidenced after the death of Bach and Handel was precipitated by an unwillingness to take this new step. When at the turn of the present age polyphony began once more to assume its customary importance, this step was frankly taken.

While incorporating all six of the prime intervals, the music of Ruggles, Varèse and Webern is perhaps more clearly dominated than any other by the minor second. Or rather, to be exact, it is dominated by the major seventh or the minor ninth, since there is, perhaps, a greater difference in sound between the minor second and its inversions than between any other prime interval and its inversions. The Ruggles counterpoint, especially, is bound together by this interval persistence. Indeed, it is because of the purity and imagination with which the composer has dealt with this structural fact that one is so quickly reminded of the great ages of counterpoint.

The domination of counterpoint by the interval of the second began, then, during the early years of this century at the time of the general polyphonic revival.

At the same time a tacit admission had to be made of the need for the chromatic or twelve-tone scale as a syntactical grounding for such a counterpoint.



Again, some sort of internal formal laws began to be felt which made necessary the loosening of old balleto-rhythmic concepts, so that the present tonal materials could achieve their true inflexion. The sudden enrichment in rhythm which has come about in the last fifty years has no parallel in the history of our art except during the brief blooming of the Isorhythmic Motet in the fifteenth century. Our exploration of mixed accent groupings on a fixed pulsation, combination of phrases of varying lengths, and the expansion of the *gruppetto* (also known as 'cross-rhythm') has been astonishing in intensity and result. A composer today who is insensitive to the force and weight of a well-disposed and varied rhythmic material is, or properly should be, an anachronism. As was well known some time ago, right rhythm decides all things tonal; it sets the tune, it clears the counterpoint, and it focuses the cadence.

These then, with the addition of melody which is mostly made up of wide non-stepwise intervals, are the natural materials of our age:

in counterpoint: the seconds  
 in syntax: the chromatic scale  
 in rhythm: cross-metre and *gruppetto*  
 in melody: the wide, non-stepwise intervals

Ruggles's music is made out of nothing but these unembarrassed, timely materials. And as I indicated above, the materials are integrally poised, in balance.

That is to say: His staunchly dissonant counterpoint does not busy along on a set of continuous running quavers or crotchets in the manner of the eighteenth century. It is a fitting possibility for consonant counterpoint to do this, or at least to present this face if you add up the sum of the voices. It is not fitting for dissonant counterpoint. Ruggles frees his polyphony from dance-patterning with the aid of varied time units (which do not add up to continuous regularity) and the *gruppetto*, so avoiding an obvious stylistic pitfall into which Hindemith long ago fell and from which many another has long been struggling.

Again the chordal combinations are arrived at by a concatenation of melodies which are in themselves wide-intervalled, varied in rhythm, and of long, fully-sustained flight. That dusty charm which lies in the neo-classic style, and which is largely possible only through some kind of disintegral creative viewpoint, is abjured by Ruggles. Whereas Stravinsky, for instance, arrives at modern chordal and rhythmic ideas through the use of melodic material of another time and hearing, Ruggles, using melodic material in keeping with the contrapuntal and rhythmic, balances these elements; they seal themselves into a prime, whole expression.

While not precluding it, total polyphony, it must be admitted, is not the very best climate for what is called tonality. The conception of musical planning, which arose during the eighteenth century, towards note persistence (which we call tonality) and which was so interesting a feature of music during the last two centuries, is

ideologically at variance with the conception of interval persistence which generates the writing of polyphony. This is a truism, the significance of which will mostly be evident to a composer, who is frequently caught in the middle of the conflict involved. Many is the time he must find his beautifully fluid counterpoint pouring itself innocently off the remotest tonal cliff, and many the time he must contrariwise find himself unable to whip a soundly planned home tonality into any action at all. This is because there are really two ways of hearing music and the two hearings are different, special, and in many ways opposed. Just as there are two main ways of composing; one by paying most attention to the notes themselves, the other by paying most attention to the intervals between.

Ruggles, who combines the two ways to a remarkable degree, is nevertheless more attracted to the interval than to the note, and so is less interested in tonality than in polyphony. Only in his first mature work, *Angels*, is the tonality a major part of the expressive content. This piece, which is clearly and simply in A flat major, in its present version, moves away from its root in the central section and returns in the recapitulation to a strong reaffirmation of the home note.

His next work, *Men and Mountains*, while gently coloured by the persistence of C sharp, is a borderline case and should properly be thought of as atonal, using that word to denote a kind of music in which note-persistence, or tonality, is not planned for in the original structure. This is not to be taken as meaning that tonality is not present. On the contrary, it is, as Schoenberg so frequently points out, impossible to avoid because of the nature of our minds. It is in all music, it is simply not a very important part of some music. And not all of this kind of music is modern; quantities of atonal music having been written in past ages, particularly in the seventeenth century.

As Ruggles's polyphonic technique grew and developed, his interest in tonality declined, and so it is of little importance in the later works, which depend more exclusively on their superb melodic and phrasal shape for their over-all effect. One cares as little in these works what the tonality is as in the chromatic works of Frescobaldi, Dowland, Gesualdo, Bach and others. It is certainly there, but it hardly matters.

Because the *Evocations*, being for pianoforte, are the most accessible of Ruggles's works to the average musical person, I choose them, now, to examine in a general way and compare with other similar works of this century and of the past.

I remember, in a conversation with Henry Cowell during 1939 or 1940, his remarking that he had been hoping for about five years to publish the *Evocations* but that they were still unfinished. Three of the originally projected five were published by the New Music Edition in 1943 and a fourth in 1945. The final piece of the five is (at the time of this writing) still in progress of composition.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This essay was written in 1946, and it appears that Carl Ruggles decided not to add a fifth piece. The complete set of four *Evocations*—as revised by the composer in 1954—will be published shortly by the American Music Edition.

Ruggles is renowned for the slowness with which he works, or rather for the length of time it seems to take him to bring a composition to completion. I don't know whether he just works slowly, chiselling and scraping every measure and phrase over a long time until the whole composition stands forth, or whether his other creative love, painting, occupies time which might otherwise be spent in musical composition. Whichever it is, I am not the only one of his admirers who periodically tears his hair over the fact that his output has been so slim in extent. We can scarcely complain of any lack in quality; on the contrary, it is because of the intriguing excellence of his work that one wants a whole library of it to exist, right off. We should, I suppose, be grateful for what he has done and forget the small amount of it; this is scarcely a prolific time for first-rate composers anyway.

The *Evocations* are Ruggles's only work for piano, and, though he is primarily an orchestral composer, are well written for the instrument from the point of view of the sound they make. They are quite difficult manually because of the stretch of the hand that is required and also because of the charming and beautiful 'after-note' technique, which he brings to fruition for the first time in keyboard writing.

This device, which on occasion appeared in the works of Liszt and several other composers of the last century, consists of a manually controlled sustaining of the resonance of various notes whose lengths are different, so that common pedalling would not give the special result. In the *Evocations* these notes constitute a kind of *shadow* of resonance which follows along behind the curves of a single melody. The individual notes, caught after striking by other fingers, drop out at specified places, so that the delicate sustained radiance is constantly changing and seems to cling at a distance to the melody. This simple device of emphasizing the end of a note (which is what seems to result from the technique) is new to keyboard music in the advanced use that Ruggles makes of it. The dropping of the notes, one by one, of a simultaneously struck chord has been heard before (it frequently sounds too tricky that way) but never this full-blown application of the device. As a way of illuminating a single melody it is extremely effective and useful. As a new piano sound it is beautiful.

It appears in a far less practical way in Ives's great *Concord Sonata*. Here it is managed with a wonderful disregard for the pianist in one of the striking variations in the centre of the first movement, a typically Ivesian grandeur just removing it from the possibility of accurate performance. It is only one of the great gestures in this wonderful work which make it at once a joy and a mystification to so many musicians.

The *Evocations* last, perhaps, ten minutes, and are non-programmatic, abstract, introspective compositions of varying expressions. They reflect Ruggles's preoccupation with linear organization and free poetic discourse. They thoroughly represent him in his recent period of clarification, and are directly personal lyric flights, immediate of expression and traditional in form. Like all fine traditional lyric expressions they are brief; not abbreviated, but concentrated.

The separate pieces are organized, each one, around a single climax and exhibit



a detailed concern for the immediate identity of phrases and the balance of phrases, but avoid all but the essential in academic design. The *Evocations* may, I suppose, be viewed as an attenuated Baroque Suite. The first of the pieces is possibly in the nature of an Overture in the noble manner. The second,<sup>2</sup> with its beautiful solo opening line, and its astonishing canon in varying time values (a 'Japanese' canon) is perhaps the Courante, and so on. But really they more resemble a set of canzonas and toccatas as written by, say, Frescobaldi. And this kind of precedent offers a model amazingly near to the modern suite of abstract pieces, of which the *Evocations* is indeed a splendid example.

The form of each piece is quite free, having a minimum of apparent thematic repetition.

Motivally the work abounds in brilliancies of the composing technique. Ruggles's masterful handling of motivial life within the bounds of a stylistically rigid medium is astonishing. Indeed the problem which he faces is so difficult of solution that he has conquered here on the highest musical grounds. His subjects evolve and have their life within an idiom which is at every turn restricting to them. That they grow and change and move about so easily and clearly is due to the mastery of the hand that made them. Their design is brilliant and ultimately sharp, like Blake's line. They define and declare themselves. Nothing is vague, nothing concealed. At every point they sing, willingly.

The *Evocations* are in several ways comparable to the *Three Piano Pieces*, Opus 11, of Schoenberg, which latter are among the most sadly neglected masterpieces of our century. Among the several other sets of piano pieces that master has written, the Opus 11 set stands out clearly in the mind, not only because it is the first of his large works for piano, but because it is, to all intents and purposes, the first major exposition in European music of the technique of dissonant counterpoint.

In an article on Schoenberg's idiom and technique, in *Modern Music*, Ernst Krenek says: 'Ever since the publication of the *Three Piano Pieces*, Opus 11, every contemporary composer has been obliged, at one time or another, to face the phenomena of "atonality", and to take his stand in regard to it. I do not believe there has ever been a similar situation in the history of music'.

A glance at the pages of this beautiful set of pieces will open up at once a world of tonal wonders to which the 'public' is apparently still insensitive, to judge from the zero number of performances the work receives in a concert life which is simply a hot-bed of good pianists. This is a disgusting and ungrateful day.

At any rate the *Evocations* relate to the *Three Piano Pieces* by reason of their being a latter-day development of the same idiomatic stream of thought. It is interesting to see, in the Ruggles works, what has survived the intervening thirty-five years by way of technical device and in what way. There are basic expressive differences,

\* See overleaf.

Evocation No. 2  
(Dedicated to John Kirkpatrick)

Carl Ruggles

**Andante con fantasia** ( $\text{♩} = \text{about } 116$ ) *poco rit.*

*sempre tempo rubato*

*with almost no pedal*

*a tempo* *poco accel.* *a tempo*

*p* *with a little pedal*

*allargando* ( $\text{♩} = 84$ ) *tempo moderato* ( $\text{♩} = 72, \text{♩} = 49$ ) *accel.* *poco rit.*

*f* *mf*

*l'istesso tempo* ( $\text{♩} = 72$ ) *più andante* ( $\text{♩} = 84$ )

*pp* *mp* *pp*

*2c. with pedal* *3c. transparently*

*poco a poco allargando*

*crescendo*

*f* *ff*

*(♩ = 66)*

28

(♩ = 60)

(♩ = 56)

33

*più andante* (♩ = 80)

*poco accel.*

*tempo ritenuto ma giusto* (♩ = 66)

*poco rit.*

*mf crescendo molto*

*ff*

*with pedal*

37

*più lento* (♩ = 52)

*poco rallentando*

*mf*

*quasi tempo primo* (♩ = 100)

*tempo primo* (♩ = 116)

*ac. with almost no pedal*

41

*poco a poco allargando*

(♩ = 80)

(♩ = 72)

(♩ = 66)

*mf*

*mf crescendo*

*cresc.*

*ff*

*mf*

*with a little pedal*

5

(♩ = 60)

*liberamente*

*f*

*dim*

*mf*

*mp*

*p*

50



naturally, between the two sets of pieces, which are the result of forces of personality. These differences will tend to disappear with time.

Obviously the small bits of the nineteenth century which, in 1910, still clung to the great Austrian are no longer to be found at all in the American. The flurry of notes, for instance, which occurs, like a Chopin arabesque, very near the beginning of the first Schoenberg piece has no counterpart anywhere in the *Evocations*, which in their architectural design are completely clean and undecorated. The idiom of the Opus 11, again, has momentary lapses, mostly for associative purposes, from the condition of extreme concentration to which it has been raised. This was caused by the prevailing romantic aesthetic of the day of their composition, which demanded along with purely musical design a certain amount of theatrical expressive formation. The last thirty-five years have freed Ruggles from this restriction. He is able to function in a clearly musical world of his own devising.

The first piece of Opus 11 is, perhaps, the most beautiful work in the idiom of dissonant counterpoint until the *Second Evocation*. Nothing during the intervening years was done which could compare with either for vigour of execution or simplicity of design. Ruggles has caught in his piece a clarity of intent and strength of purpose which must obviously have been present at the composition of the Schoenberg piece. The idiom of the *Evocations* stays more within its type than does the idiom of Numbers 2 and 3 of the Opus 11, where simplicity of contrapuntal conception begins to get lost in a world of typical figurations and over-complexities. Each of the *Evocations* is a newly executed adventure in basic materials. None of them rests upon reflection or taken-for-granted ideas. In this way they are a clarification and illumination of the style.

I have already remarked on the likeness between the Frescobaldi *Canzonas* and the *Evocations*. Other relationships to works of the past present themselves as well; relationships to the Elizabethan virginal composers, for instance, to the Purcell Suites, the early Spanish keyboard writers and so on. A real exploration of these likenesses is a pleasure which I recommend to the reader. He will discover for himself how long-rooted and captivating is the tradition which includes the *Evocations*, pieces worthy to be placed beside the works of Byrd, Gibbons, Purcell and Frescobaldi.

As a creative mind Ruggles is definitely of the individualist persuasion. His way of working over a long period of time towards the ultimate clarity and precision of a particular musical formation is an indication of this attitude. So, too, is the over-all coherence, stylistically, which his output presents. The creative type which is attracted to the many faces of the world, or which is driven by its spiritual sympathies to embrace many and diverse outlooks, can scarcely advance so singularly solid a front both technically and expressively.

Unlike Ives, whose great output is like a large family in which no two persons are in any way of agreement, Ruggles's is like a family in which each member says to the other, Yes.

Ives's great, immediate sympathy with the outer signs of the inner world, his instant tenderness to diversity of the heart and mind, his inclination to a general love of the vast and inexact body of his people and time; all these affections lead him, rather force him to the enormous differentiation one from another which his pieces show. Like Whitman and Eilshemius he is carried along on a kind of loving wind. He cannot resist the ubiquity of his affections. His creative life is, indeed, a high public act, a presidential term, a textbook of the nation, a campaign. And it is a grand one, full of the warmest gestures to friends and enemies, big with an innocent immensity.

Ruggles, if Ives is the type of the public artist, is the private man; inquisitive, reflective, violent of allegiance, aristocratic, and above all religious. He is the type visited with a fire from heaven. He fuses together without seam the whole person of the separate soul. Like Ryder he waits to sift diversity, to test without rest until, after all other persons of the mind take leave, there is yet left some special private unity; and then, finally, to record the dubious outline of that self.

But to the rest of us how sharp and fired that outline is, both in the tense and mindful canvases of the painter and in the clear, purposeful counterpoints of the composer. Both artists are driven to work in basic materials, because only the sturdiest stuffs, and the simplest, could bear the violence of their workmanship, or indeed, preserve over the extent of a composition's growth an outline sharp enough to register the smallest change of sense or force. For in a certain way the works of Ryder were pigmental registrations of the yearly profits of his soul. Had not death set them forever as they are, they would probably yet be showing the gentlest changes of design, the smallest swerve of outline, as his intense, inexplicable will drove him further through existence.

So Ruggles continues to set down changes in the clear resilient medium of his art that show his constant passage through living. Works long set, we thought, continue to grow and change, to reveal within themselves new meanings and surprising turns of nearly-missed expression, which, by a change here and there, he draws up suddenly to the ear.

In all this he is surely one of the most astonishing among the composers of his time. None other that I know of has pursued to so great a degree the constant clarification and, still further, the ultimate, right form for work which already, at the drawing of the double bar, has been the mercilessly investigated subject of over a hundred intent listenings by its creator. That works made in such a manner should have survived in his mind in gently altered ways the swift violences of the fashions of our time is not a wonder, for they are not the constructions of an opportune moment, either inside or out, but sharp, revealed drawings of a burning personal unity. And they will survive geometrically longer in the minds of others for the confidence and faith Ruggles has put into their make-up.

How wonderful he is, this little man with his curiously peaked head, his clear blue eyes and the gusty brilliance that seems always to be active in him, moving him

one minute to the loud pronouncement of the coarsest joke he can think of, and in the next to the tenderness and charm that have long endeared him to myriad friends. How like he is to Blake in the unshaken strength with which he charges the secret gates of the soul, to Thoreau ('I ask to be melted. You can only ask of the metals that they be tender to the fire that melts them. To naught else can they be tender.') in the independent lyricism of his mind, to Rilke in the wonderful beauty of his introspective powers.

How distilled and clear a one he is of the kind of man, who having once seen the living word, is from that moment on engaged in a travelling struggle with angels. He will accept no plaster-casting of the heart's integrity. In this land of the thoroughly maimed, he is a wonder, and a strength.

CARL RUGGLES: Born, Marion, Mass., in 1876, studied with Claus, Spalding, Timmer, and at Harvard University. Founded and conducted the Winona Symphony Orchestra. Was an active member, during their existence, of the *International Composers' Guild* and the *Pan-American Association of Composers*. His major works have been played in New York, San Francisco, Boston, Havana, Paris, Venice, Budapest, Madrid, Berlin, and Barcelona. He was elected to the *National Institute of Arts and Letters* in 1954. Is at present writing a new orchestral work commissioned by the Louisville Symphony.

#### LIST OF WORKS:

<i>Toys</i> , for soprano and piano. 1919	Curwen
<i>Angels</i> , for six trumpets. 1921	Curwen
<i>Angels</i> , revised for four violins and three celli or for four trumpets and three trombones. 1938	
<i>Men and Mountains</i> , for chamber orchestra. 1924	New Music
<i>Portals</i> , for string ensemble or for string orchestra. 1926	New Music
<i>Sun Trader</i> , for large orchestra. 1933	New Music
<i>Evocations</i> , for piano solo. 1937 to 1945	American Music Edition
<i>Organum</i> , for orchestra. 1945	New Music
Early works, not published, include a full length opera, <i>The Sunken Bell</i> (from the drama by Gerhart Hauptmann). Another work, <i>Vox Clamans, in Deserto</i> , for solo voice and chamber orchestra, also remains in manuscript.	

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## THE RHYTHMIC BASIS OF AMERICAN MUSIC

*Elliott Carter*

It would be convenient if one could say—as so many have done—that the distinguishing mark of serious American music is its employment (or reworking) of the rhythms of our native folk or popular music, particularly jazz. Yet the attempt to reduce national characteristics to a few simple traits is a game that quickly wears thin in the artistic world, as in life itself. In earlier years when American music was just beginning to take shape, such an attempt may have been useful; but now that a substantial number of works has accumulated, neither critics nor composers feel it any longer necessary to emphasize national characteristics. On the contrary, instead of insisting that American music stands apart from that of Europe, it becomes interesting to consider the many foreign influences by which it has been nourished.

During the nineteen-twenties, jazz had a great influence on European music as well as on ours. Its impact in Europe was strong precisely because its techniques had already been anticipated by various composers. Bartók, Stravinsky and even Schoenberg (in the first of his *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, written in 1909) had all been using irregular rhythmic patterns, and the appearance of jazz stimulated further interest in this rhythmic procedure. Indeed European composers adopted only those aspects of jazz that had already been tried to some extent before its arrival. These very same aspects influenced the young American modernists of the time; but through greater familiarity with the source they had a different feeling for rhythm. As a result, jazz had far more effect abroad than in many quarters at home.

The American composer's relationship to jazz is in fact quite different from what one might expect. Heard constantly from every corner, this music has lost its original freshness; the techniques have become shopworn, the performances routinized and dull. It is perhaps for these reasons that most composers have avoided using the jazz idiom in their concert music; and also because orchestral musicians often do not play jazz well, and cannot under the conditions of concert life be afforded the rehearsals needed for good jazz. Today in out-of-the-way places one can still find fresh lively jazz performances, and the improvisatory character of what is played is impossible to imitate with concert musicians. There are Marc Blitzstein, Leonard Bernstein and Morton Gould, who, writing in the jazz idiom for popular consumption, have tried to place it (as Kurt Weill did) on a more meaningful and artistic level. But the majority of composers interested in this trend have drawn only on certain characteristics of popular music, combining them with other folk-sources or neo-

classic ones to produce works of larger scope, more interesting formal possibilities and more variety.

There were four composers who helped to establish these techniques in the early stages of the contemporary movement in America. Roy Harris, Aaron Copland and Roger Sessions followed the lead given them by contemporary European music and jazz and embodied a new feeling for rhythm in their music. The fourth, Charles Ives, living in seclusion, followed a different and more curious path and his achievements are not yet well enough known to be properly judged.

Early in his career, Harris made a remark that has often been quoted: 'Our rhythmic sense is less symmetrical than the European rhythmic sense. European musicians are trained to think of rhythm in its largest common denominator, while we are born with a feeling for its smallest units.' Although this appeared after a number of outstanding works by Stravinsky and Bartók had revealed the possibilities of irregular groupings of small units—which is what Harris is talking about—there is no doubt that he had a point in mind which becomes clear in the context of his own music and of jazz practice. For in spite of their irregular rhythmic patterns, written with constantly changing metres, Stravinsky and Bartók do often treat their irregular accents as displacements of regular ones by marking them with the same kind of vigour that was reserved in older music for syncopations. The quality of these accents is quite different from those used in jazz and in much new American music. In jazz, especially of the nineteen-twenties and thirties, the melodic line frequently has an independent rhythmic life; the metrical units are grouped into irregular (or regular) patterns, in melodic motives whose rhythm runs against the underlying 1, 2, 3, 4 of dance rhythm. Roy Harris carried this technique further by writing long, continuously developing melodies in which groups of two, three, four or five units (such as quavers) are joined together to produce irregular stresses, but with the underlying regular beat of jazz omitted. Several such lines when sounded together produce interesting textures of 'cross-accented counterpoint' which is not unlike such counterpoint found in the English madrigal school, although stressed more intensely and associated with very different types of melody. A characteristic example of this is to be found in the canonic last movement of his first *Piano Sonata* (1929).

Aaron Copland has been outspoken about his relationship with popular music both in his writings and in his composition. He drew from the jazz of the nineteen-twenties a principle of polyrhythm in which the melody is accented in regular groups of three crotchets while the bass plays its conventional 4/4. In works closely concerned with the jazz idiom, like his *Piano Concerto* (1926), we find this polyrhythmic method extended to groupings such as 5/8, 7/8, and 5/4. In many sections of these works Copland followed jazz in sounding the regular beat but as in Harris there were places where the beat was not expressed. In works written a little later such as the *Symphonic Ode* (1929) and the *Short Symphony* (1933) he dispensed with the regular beat altogether. Unlike Harris, Copland maintains a direct relationship with jazz or other kinds of American dance music, especially in his fast movements. For

instance, in *El Salon Mexico* (1936), he applied his rhythmic method to Mexican popular dances in which alternations of 6/8 (two groups of three quavers) and 3/4 (three groups of two quavers) are characteristic. Great portions of this work are made of the irregular rhythms that result from sounding these groups of two and three in such patterns as two, three, three, two, two, three. Similar patterns may be found in the faster parts of his *Piano Sonata*, *Clarinet Concerto* and *Piano Quartet*. His style, far more incisive than that of Harris, has the variety of quality of accent characteristic of its American sources. But although he mentions the fact that jazz performers often play their improvisations with great rhythmic freedom, sounding their notes a bit before or after the beat, Copland has never incorporated this in his own music.

Roger Sessions carried the technique of irregular grouping to much greater extremes—particularly in contrapuntal textures—in the first movement of his *First Symphony* (1927) which is one of the most extensive essays in cross-accented counterpoint yet attempted. Although this work clearly derives from the European neo-classic school, its remarkable rhythmic shifts give it an American sound, and for this reason it exercised (together with Sessions's first *Piano Sonata*), a considerable influence on composers of the nineteen-thirties.

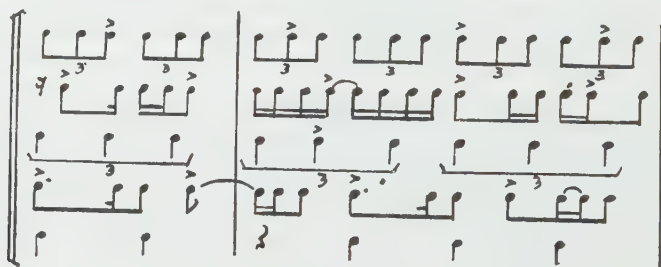
But this particular technique is only one of the many rhythmic devices to be found in jazz. It is well-known, for instance, that in the actual interpretation of written notation a tradition of making slight distortions of note-values in the interests of rhythmic and expressive freedom has been handed down from one performer to another in the jazz world. It is a tradition surprisingly similar to that of the Baroque 'notes inégales'. In both, equal quavers are played in dotted fashion or as triplets of crotchet and quaver. But not only do jazz performers take liberties with notation, they also improvise so freely that their parts have an expressive rubato, slowing down and speeding up while the rhythm section keeps its steady beat. It is in this domain that Charles Ives worked, although much of his music was written before the technique became a common practice in jazz bands. It may already have been present, however, in the ragtime of Ives's day, as it is a tendency which is noticeable in any long-continued tradition of dance music, being occasionally found in the late periods of the waltz as well as in South and Central American popular music.

Ives went one step further than the composers mentioned above by exploring the realm of 'artificial divisions'—triplets, quintuplets and the like—to produce such complex polyrhythmic combinations that they seem to defy adequate performance or even audibility. His was usually a literary point of view in which fairly literal quotations of familiar patriotic, religious or dance tunes are presented simultaneously with an expressive commentary in another remotely related or unrelated speed. For instance, in the second movement of *Three Places in New England*, a boy dreams of two groups of soldiers marching at different speeds, one disappearing as the other appears; in *The Unanswered Question*, the question is posed ever more insistently and rapidly by the winds while the strings play a quiet, meditative background,

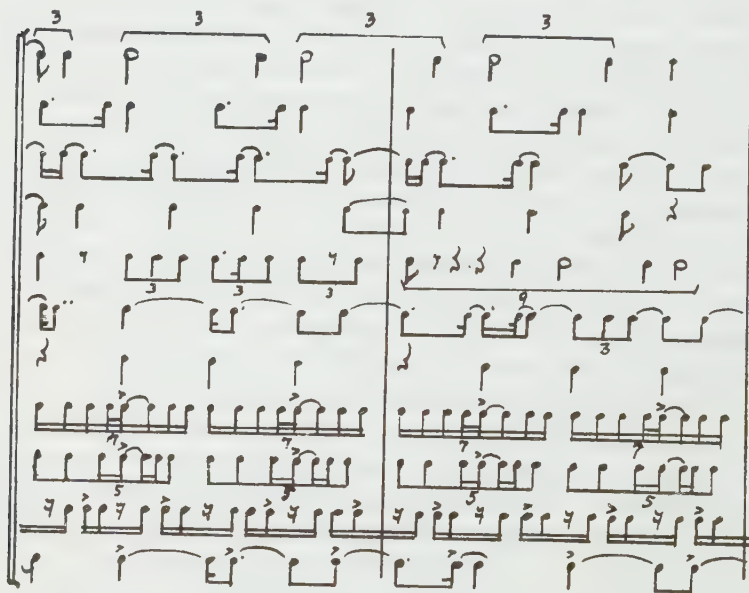


impassively unrelated in speed and harmony and requiring a separate conductor. This combination of different rhythmic planes involved Ives in complex problems of notation, especially in his later works written between 1910 and 1920.

He uses three main procedures. The first consists in the superposition of different speeds that can be expressed in notation with a common unit, as in these examples from the second movement of his *Fourth Symphony* written in 1916 and revised and published in 1929:



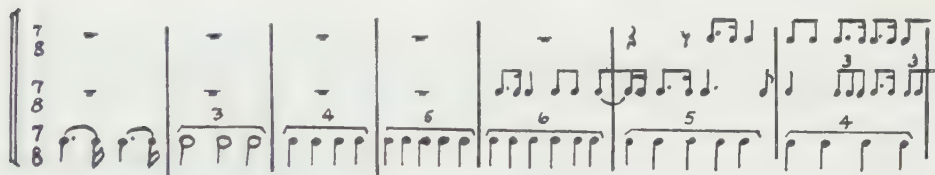
Later in the work, these measures appear which show greater freedom of rhythm:



Here the second, third and fourth lines are the rhythms of the brass and winds playing a dissonant harmonization of a national anthem, with the violas and 'cellos helping out in the line above the bottom. The sixth and bottom lines contain the

rhythms of piano, bells and basses playing a hymn tune in another system of dissonant harmony. The other lines are rhythms of various figurations, those of the quintuplets and septuplets belonging to the strings.

A second type of rhythmic device used by Ives, consists in notated rubati on one level and strict time on another as in this example from *Calcium Light*:



In a third type two unrelated levels are heard simultaneously. In both *The Unanswered Question* and *Central Park in the Dark*, a quiet ostinato of strings directed by one conductor forms the background for faster, louder music directed by another conductor and played fragmentarily allowing the soft background to be heard in the silences. Similar unrelated planes of music requiring the services of several conductors occur in the *Fourth Symphony* and other of Ives's later works.

These various procedures, so novel and occasionally of remarkable effectiveness, were described in Henry Cowell's book, *New Musical Resources* (New York, 1930), but have gained little currency because the great difficulties of performance that they involve have proved a real deterrent to a number of composers interested in continuing Ives's methods. A striking resolution of this problem has been made by Conlon Nancarrow, a composer who patiently measures and perforates his compositions on player-piano rolls. Not having to be concerned with performance, he has composed a number of interesting works including three *Rhythm Studies* derived from the jazz idiom and employing unusual polyrhythms. In the most elaborate measures of his *Rhythm Study No. 1* four distinct planes of rhythm are combined, as will be seen in the example overleaf.

Since the player-piano cannot accent individual notes, the third line of chords in this example marks the accents of the groups of seven of the notes on the first staff. The polyrhythmic combinations are: first and second staves—three against two, grouped in figures of seven and three respectively; first and fifth staves—five against two; second and fourth—eight against three; second and fifth—five against three; fourth and fifth—five against eight. The whole produces a most novel sound.

The works of Ives and Nancarrow are scarcely known even in America, but they attest to a continuing interest in rhythm which seems a part of the American scene. A few such as Henry Brant and the author have worked in this field. Brant

Musical score for a piece in 3/4 time, featuring five staves. The top staff is a melody in treble clef with a tempo marking of quarter note = 210. The second staff is a bass line in bass clef with a tempo marking of quarter note = 280. The third staff is a bass line in bass clef with a tempo marking of quarter note = 120. The fourth staff is a bass line in bass clef with a tempo marking of quarter note = 210. The fifth staff is a bass line in bass clef with a tempo marking of quarter note = 160. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'loco' and 'basso'.

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has followed Ives in using a technique of unrelated or 'uncöordinated' rhythm, as he calls it. The author's approach is discussed elsewhere in this issue.

It must be said, however, that only a few American composers are seriously concerned with rhythmic problems. Owing to the influence of Copland, Harris and Sessions, many seem to have an innate rhythmic sense that is different from that of European composers. But there has been little temptation to explore the field, as each of these three has lately become much more conservative in this respect, for performances of their rhythmically difficult works have been rare.



## HOW RIGHT IS RIGHT ?

*Robert Evett*

American music has always shown a tendency to rely on standards drawn from German classicism. Nevertheless, there have been two marked reversals of taste in the present century: one in the twenties, when the young American moderns, French-trained, seemed to be reacting not only against their predecessors but also against the established German concepts; and another, during the last ten years, as a result of which many skilful and dedicated composers—whose aesthetic and technical standards are basically traditional—have been abandoned in a somewhat stunned condition and are still trying to find their way back onto the musical scene.

In a sense, it is absurd to discuss these composers as a 'group', which is what I'm about to do. In the first place, they have never been noted for unity; they have developed the most disparate styles, their methods differ widely, their tastes and their musical ancestries rarely coincide. Given all this divergence at the outset, one can expect them to be alike only in the sharing of certain broad principles, which are these:

1. A fundamental allegiance to tonality,
2. A concern for counterpoint and conventionally 'correct' part-writing,
3. A tendency to build their work on expansive melodic materials,
4. A striving for the Grand Manner and extreme seriousness of mood, especially in their more protracted works,
5. A tendency towards relatively simple orchestration,
6. An affection for certain antique forms and formal procedures, to which one may (I think, fairly) add, a penchant for getting involved with Universities and conservatoires.

Their most fundamental differences have to do with:

1. The treatment of consonance and dissonance,
2. Thematic structure and the size, shape and use of the phrase or period,
3. The use of repetition as a structural device, and
4. Methods of development.

Two of the older composers most influential in the evolution of this group illustrate, by their differences, the range of variation one finds within it. Walter Piston is, and always has been, extremely fond of classical rondo and sonata usages; Roy Harris dislikes all such devices and usually builds his more homophonic works in a free variation pattern. Piston writes an essentially functional harmony, in which dissonance and consonance provide the traditional tension and release; Harris approaches harmony as moving texture, using dissonance (which he doesn't like to call by that name) only as colour. It would be very difficult to conjure up a single

point of superficial similarity between the two men. Yet they still share many of those characteristics listed above.

None of the composers who could be called 'tonal traditionalists' is at present enjoying any great national *chic*, and many of the very best are unknown outside their own regions. The bigger reputations in this group were nearly all of them made fifteen or twenty years ago.

William Schuman became a famous composer at a very early point in his career. This was due partly to his proficiency, partly to the fact that, in the late thirties, the kind of music naturally generated by his taste and training was in great demand. At that time, Koussevitsky was championing a very small group of American composers, not only by playing their works but also by pontifically proclaiming their greatness to the press; and Schuman was one of those who profited from his patronage.

Like much of the music of that period, Schuman's was written under the shadow of Roy Harris. Schuman would probably have been a good composer even if he had never become acquainted with Harris, but his music would have had a different sound and structure. Even in the *Third Symphony*, where he came closest to Harris, Schuman had already developed certain stylistic characteristics of his own: his harmonies are tarter than Harris's, his melodies less modal, his music more highly ornamented. In spite of this, the structure of Schuman's *Third* is emphatically modelled on Harris: it is tonal, but innocent of dissonance-resolution; the harmony is conceived in terms of colour and texture; variation procedures replace sonata-type statements and developments; the fugue replaces the rondo and provides the element of literal repetition.

Harris has always taught that polytonality is only tonality to which certain inflective potentials have been added, and it is particularly in his harmonic procedures that Schuman shows his adherence to this belief. And, like so many people who heard Harris talk about music fifteen years ago, Schuman draws his melodies out into long, asymmetrical phrases. The horror that Schuman shares with so many of his contemporaries of the eight-bar period and of dominant usages in general must be considered a legacy from Harris.

Schuman must be more than tired of having this parallel drawn, especially since for many years now his music has borne no superficial resemblance whatever to Harris's. As for Harris, he must surely have been perturbed by Schuman's development, so true to the letter but so foreign to the spirit of his own doctrines on harmony. From the *String Symphony*, via *Judith*, to the *Sixth Symphony* and the *Fourth Quartet*, Schuman's music has become consistently more flexible in point of harmonic texture, more chromatic in its melodic materials, freer and more expanded in form. Of all the composers so cavalierly grouped together here, he is probably the least ridden by tradition. It is in his part-writing that the older influences are most apparent: he would find it difficult to write Stravinskian homophony, and if he adopted the twelve-note technique, which is most unlikely, he would bring to it his own tonal and harmonic controls.

Like Schuman, Peter Mennin came into prominence at a phenomenally early age. Unlike Schuman, however, he did not suddenly appear on the crest of a wave. He was, and is, an anachronism. He 'arrived' at a time when his contemporaries, tired of very serious and sometimes heavy-handed native music, were about to involve themselves first with the Bartók of the Quartets and then with the Schoenbergians. Mennin brought with him the kind of qualities that earned him unfavourable comparison with Hindemith. Yet this comparison was unfair to both: above all, because Mennin is—and this cannot be stated too emphatically—an orchestral composer, in the shamelessly colourful French sense. He would be incapable of turning out a work as drably scored as Hindemith's *Schwanendreher*; but equally incapable, given only a piano and a singer, of producing a *Marienleben*. His six symphonies are a remarkable accomplishment for a composer in his early thirties, but they also form a sort of manifesto. To function properly, Mennin needs colour and, to a lesser degree, room.

Like Schuman, he builds asymmetrical materials which would be uncomfortable in forms as confined as those generally employed by Hindemith. However, in his characteristic employment of counterpoint as a light, ornamental inlay, drawing its tradition less from German classicism than from the Baroque and Renaissance—with roots in the Bachs, Froberger, Scheidt, Sweelinck, Frescobaldi and the Gabriellis—Mennin shares a big tradition with Hindemith.

In some of his recent works (such as the *Third Quartet*) he has attempted to introduce elements of severity that hardly belong to him, but are fashionable just now in New York. Let us hope that this new development will soon pass, for New York is a model of inconstancy in such matters and Mennin is quite lacking, thank the Lord, in that sense which enables smart composers who want to stay smart, to change their styles *on time*.

It's a terrible thing to feel somehow *déclassé* because of one's style, and composers who grew up and were trained in the tonal, essentially Germanic tradition that prevailed in the United States during the late thirties and early forties find the present situation difficult to accept. So far as the Laity is concerned they are still ultra-moderns, writing a difficult, inaccessible music. Yet, among the moderns, they are allowed the distinction (which they consider most dubious) of serving as a right-wing, and a dull, academic right-wing at that. The fact that they (most of them, at least) earn their livings as teachers makes the charge of academicism all the more brutal.

Some of these composers have tried to discard their own styles in order to remain in 'the vanguard', but I know of no instances in which this effort has been wholly successful.

Amidst all the shuffling of styles that has gone on in recent years, the example of Vincent Persichetti will have to be thought of as unique until someone can produce his opposite number. Persichetti was a virtuoso pianist and organist—a real *Wunderkind*—before transforming himself into a composer at the age of fourteen in 1929, the date of his opus 1. From the outset, he was endowed with a taste as catholic



as it was irreverent, and his work falls into the context of these remarks only because he is commonly included among the 'Juilliard' composers. His music is much wilder at its wildest and much tamer at its tamest than that of any of the others; his style ranges further to the left and further to the right than theirs'. The extreme limits of his musical intentions were implied, indeed, in his first two works: one, jagged, dissonant, angular and brilliant; the other soft and sweet. And his whole career has been devoted to filling in the middle and refining the extremes. Long before it was *au courant* in the United States, Persichetti had adapted the twelve-note method to his own devices. His particular adaptation of this method, missing in the first four symphonies, appears again in the fifth, as in his *Concerto for Piano Duet* and his new *Piano Quintet*; works which were under construction when he composed his primarily diatonic (frequently polytonal) *Harpsichord Sonata*, a number of relatively moderate piano sonatas and sonatinas, and his *Little Piano Book*, a work which shows him at his extreme right.

It is easy to focus one's attention on the two extremes in Persichetti, where the apparent inconsistency is shocking. In point of fact, however, the body of his writing serves as a sliding scale, and a consistency appears which makes it clear why Persichetti doesn't care to go any further in either extreme. Again, the unifying element is a harmony based on texture. The sonorities in his song cycle *The Harmonium*, for instance, are very difficult to place in a conventional tonal pattern, though tonality always seems to be present; on the other hand, in the simplest diatonic-triadic pieces of the almost-conventional *Little Piano Book*, normal-sounding root progressions look wrong. Despite appearances, it is the method of building and dealing with harmony that is common to both extremes.

Persichetti is intent on writing a big literature, and he has already succeeded in reconciling opposites, as well as contributing extraordinary variety. So far, however, he has employed his lighter style only in short works. He has still to produce a big piece which is serious only in the sense that the *Haffner* Symphony is serious, and since he is thoroughly equipped for such writing, it would be a pleasure to hear an extended piece from him in this vein.

One of the best-equipped and most imaginative composers in the United States, and one of the most absurdly neglected, is Robert Palmer. His music is sustained by a tremendous rhythmic drive, as elaborate metrically as Stravinsky's, but almost always heavily polyphonic. In his chamber music, the polyphony can be a hazard in performance; so much is going on that there is sometimes a question as to what deserves emphasis. The rhythmic complexities often suggest those in renaissance choral music, and Palmer's technique has been conditioned as much by composers as remote as these as it has by the work of the older Moderns. Harmonically, he is more concerned with problems of tension and release than with those of texture.

Palmer knows exactly what he is doing and is not in the least interested in doing anything else. He does not want to experiment with a heavier or lighter use of dissonance, with heavier or lighter chromaticism, with extended polytonality nor

with the twelve-note method. Because of this, he is one of the few among his contemporaries who can look back on almost twenty years of completely consistent work. Yet, particularly in the last five years, his music seems to have widened in scope. His style is now as flexible an instrument in his hands as the High Baroque was when it was common practice. When the time comes for Palmer to take his proper place, he will bring a most impressive literature with him. And actually, now that so many of his more important pieces are available in print and some of them on records, his future seems much more secure than it did only two or three years ago.

Samuel Barber has always been a right wing composer; ten years ago, his music, with its key-signatures and unaltered dominant cadences, was considered awfully soft by composers like those mentioned here. It is still difficult to think of most of his writing as 'modern', and to list him here is only to show what strange bedfellows adversity can make. Actually, adversity has never come too close to Barber. From the outset, he was a composer after Toscanini's own heart, with a wonderful sense of the orchestra and a knack for writing attractive music that would still bear considerable scrutiny. Barber's own stylistic evolution was certainly affected by the vogue for austere music; his employment of twelve-note devices, as in the *Piano Sonata*, has helped to relax the melodic substance of his work, and his gradual adoption of a more astringent harmonic idiom has brought with it an intensity which his earlier music lacks.

If music within the extremes demonstrated by the work of these men were played more, the names of other like-minded composers, most of them younger, would have to be included. Unfortunately, the younger people have very little chance of obtaining the performances that might help to establish them with big reputations.

The reason is partly that the present conductors of the major American orchestras are not interested in this kind of music. Mitropoulos, for instance, chooses strong works by the young atonalists and balances them with weak tonal pieces or popular pot-boilers by men like Morton Gould. Munch, unlike Koussevitsky, plays little American music. His recent success with Barber's *Sorrows of Kierkegaard* could have been taken as a cue for performing more works of the same persuasion; and Munch has played, among others, Piston and Mennin, but he does not seem to be about to take any chances. Ormandy has introduced two of Persichetti's symphonies with great success, but his record has been poor. In chamber-music, the situation is easier; a composer has a much better chance of hearing his string quartets in public than his orchestral music.

The hope for most of these composers lies outside New York, in cities like Boston, San Francisco, Washington, Louisville, Denver, where a great deal of new music is heard, even though it may not be heard *of* very far outside the parish limits, at least for the time being.

## STRAVINSKY AND THE YOUNGER AMERICAN COMPOSERS

*Arthur Berger*

Among the brief 'Appreciations' of Stravinsky that comprise a section of the book *Stravinsky in the Theatre*, published some five years ago (Minna Lederman, editor), there is one by Aaron Copland in which he writes: 'Among our younger generation it is easy to discover a Stravinsky school: Shapero, Haieff, Berger, Lessard, Foss, Fine'. Copland was commenting on the capacity of this master to 'influence two succeeding generations in ways diametrically opposed', and the younger Americans he cites represent, naturally, those who 'rallied to the new cause' of what has been saddled with the unfortunate rubric (or so it seems to me) of 'neo-classicism'.

If he were writing today I doubt that Copland would have limited himself to these six. Charles Jones, Talma, Dahl, Smit and DesMarais are additional names to this growing circle that come at once to my mind. Nor am I sure there are not others, since this is not a group strictly defined by its members or pamphleteers. If the term 'group' is at all applicable to the subject at hand, there are groups within the group. Essentially I am writing about separate figures who admire the example set by a dominating master of the century, and a common cause has brought them together in friendships, exchange of ideas and severe mutual criticism.

I may be doing an injustice in calling attention to this common cause. Twelve-tone composers enjoy a certain immunity from the accusation of being servile followers. Their method is taken to be abstract and impersonal, something that may be adapted to individual ends. But though the principles embodied in Stravinsky's music may be abstracted and adapted in a somewhat similar fashion (though not as a concrete system) his dominating personality is likely to be invoked in the mind of the critic or listener whenever these principles are applied elsewhere. Twelve-tone method in a new work by a young composer is generally acknowledged as a matter of vocabulary or technique. The critic then proceeds to an evaluation that depends on whether or not he accepts the method. But if the young composer has profited in any substantial degree from the contributions made by Stravinsky between, roughly, 1920 and 1950, the onus of unwarranted borrowing is almost sure to be placed on him. After a recent première of a work of my own, for example, I was presented by the press with the verdict that if my 'name were not attached one might easily guess it to be one of [Stravinsky's] smaller ballet scores'. While I regret the critic's failure to grasp the qualities that I should like to believe are my personal



contributions (though I cannot say whether they are successful or not), I feel highly complimented that my craftsmanship should have been in any way mistakable for Stravinsky's.

This is, of course, an extreme instance. But even when Stravinsky's name is brought in less obtrusively for description, a criticism is already implied. Nothing is gained when the term 'neo-classicist' replaces his name. If it shares with the phrase, 'twelve-tone composer', the advantage of being impersonal and impartial, it carries implications of pseudo-classicism, academicism, conservatism.

It is a curious paradox that on the subject of Stravinsky's own music we so often read pronouncements like this: 'Bits of Handel, Gounod, Wagner, Bellini, Delibes, Johann Strauss and fragments of a dozen other of Stravinsky's predecessors out of different centuries float to the surface, disappear, reappear. The music is without coherence, without integrity of style'. But if, in what we may now call his 'middle' period, he made no contribution of his own, if he was a mere cataloguer of old formulae, how is it possible to detect so readily his manner of this period in the works of younger men?

I can only conclude that the unfortunate attitude towards Stravinsky's musical progeny is motivated by the same factors that are responsible for the critical disapproval he himself receives. Among these factors I might mention a preconceived notion as to how music ought to evolve (onward, that is to say, in a straight line from Wagner and Strauss) and an inability for many listeners to apprehend a new work in its totality, with the result that they are weighed down with disembodied materials and superficial symptoms. Stravinsky's disciples, even those with fully developed personalities, are stigmatized for their debt to him by critics who disavow him in the first place, while almost any conservatory student is allowed to get by though he may lean in the most flagrant fashion upon Bartók or Prokofieff.

Disapproval of new music is far from unexpected, and some of it may be just. But criticism can scarcely be heeded when it fails to show any signs of discriminating one personality from another within a school that makes no secret of its common allegiance. Merely drawing attention to the allegiance resembles the approach levelled at Brahms because of the suggestions of Beethoven in his music—a reproach that he is reported to have dismissed promptly with the remark, 'Any ass can see that'. It would seem far more to the point to attempt to determine the differences among the composers of the Stravinsky school—differences that, to one observing from within, appear far too substantial to be figments of a prejudiced participant.

If it is difficult to recognize the traditional element in works that seem very radical when first heard, it may be equally difficult to recognize what is new in works that are not radical in idiom. In both cases, incomplete perception results in misunderstanding. At one time Copland was described as the 'Brooklyn Stravinsky', which may seem an odd characterization for anyone who manifested strong per-

sonality almost from the start. Twenty-five years from today it may also seem odd that the individuality of Stravinsky's more recent disciples was not appreciated. But I should not be willing to risk a wager on this, nor do I think it is enormously important. In general the cultivation of personality is not the ardent and almost conscious pursuit nowadays that it was for composers who grew up closer to the influence of that intensified quest for novelty that came as an aftermath of *Le Sacre*. The challenge to our newer generations is to consolidate our century's vast new resources and to rehabilitate solid structures after years of sheer effect for its own sake. It is in these areas that Stravinsky has set remarkable examples. Personal elements exist among his newer disciples, but they will be harder to fathom than those that existed among his disciples in earlier generations. On the other hand, there are many different approaches in the current school, there is no regimentation.

Not only is cultivation of personality in the 'old-fashioned' sense of, say, twenty-five or fifty years ago not a major consideration of the new Stravinsky school, but, along the same lines, it is also indifferent to developing the American characteristics that occupied Copland's attention. There is a feeling we have entered another of the periods of internationalism that recur from time to time in music's history. I suspect this may be a source of disappointment to Copland after his spade-work. But he may find consolation in the fact that most of the younger composers who are devoted to Stravinsky are devoted to him, too. This may be because his own debt to the Stravinsky of such works as the Octet, places him in the family and because, in or out of this family, his own stature on the American scene casts a sizeable shadow as inescapable to many Americans as Stravinsky's. Certain works of the 'forties by members of the Stravinsky school might have been very different were it not for Copland's contribution. Of these I might mention Shapero's *Sonata for Piano Four Hands*, Lukas Foss's *The Prairie* (a cantata), Irving Fine's *Music for Piano*, Louise Talma's *Piano Sonata*, and Leo Smit's earlier piano pieces and ballet music.

It was Nadia Boulanger, no doubt, who was a key figure in solidifying the kinship between Copland and Stravinsky, and my account of the parentage of our school would be very incomplete, indeed, if she were not mentioned. Copland started the procession of American composers to Paris to study with her, and it was following the example of Copland and such of his fellow-composers as Walter Piston, that the majority of our school similarly came into contact with her and shared her enthusiasm for Stravinsky—all of us but Dahl, Foss, Jones and Smit.

My own interest in Stravinsky's works of the decade from 1925 to 1935 was aroused before I went to Paris, while I was a graduate student at Harvard University in the mid-'thirties. These works were just becoming known in America. At Harvard they found a congenial atmosphere for study and the Boston Symphony provided rare opportunity to hear some of them at a time when they were pretty much ignored elsewhere. When I returned to Harvard in 1941, I met Shapero, then an undergraduate. His early works, under Krenek's guidance, had taken a turn in a twelve-tone direction. I seem to have been instrumental in changing that direction (though

I do not doubt he would have reached the same conclusions on his own) and then it was that the Stravinsky school mentioned by Copland above established a nucleus.

The origin and early flowering of the school in and around Harvard prompted some people to talk of it in the early days as a 'Harvard' or 'Boston' group. Even when we look back today, Boston seems to be the centre from which its various arteries flow. Several members are either natives of the Boston region (Shapero, Fine) or have spent long periods there (Foss, DesMarais, myself), and the godparents, Stravinsky, Copland and Boulanger, have gravitated there from time to time, leaving a profound impression with their lectures and teaching at Harvard and Radcliffe. The Boston Symphony's summer school at Tanglewood, where Copland, Fine and Foss have taught, may be considered a Boston annexe. As a faculty member, Dahl established contact with the centre. But his entrance was relatively recent. Prior to that, the nucleus of Shapero and myself was augmented by Fine, another Harvard man, and each of us individually met Alexei Haieff who, an inhabitant of New York since 1932, had been born in Russia and thus brought with him a certain authenticity as a Stravinsky heir. Foss entered the circle after years of devotion to Hindemith; and Smit entered it unabashedly as a disciple of Shapero. Boulanger seems to have been responsible for Louise Talma, John Lessard and Paul DesMarais. Jones has been somewhat aloof from the group or school as such, his affinity stemming, rather, from personal contact with Stravinsky, while at the same time he remains faithful to Milhaud.

\* \* \*

Though musical illustrations are important to a musical discussion, passages out of context will not do much to illuminate the present subject. Stravinsky's own allusions to Bach or Mozart do not convey the essence of his restatement of classical principles. They are accidents or materials that happen to fit a medium in which new qualities are achieved with diatonic materials. I could cite characteristic Stravinskian twists of melody that recur in the music of his disciples (the ascent of a major third, for example, followed by the descending major seventh: Do-Mi-Fa). But such tune detection is common enough, and besides, it does not tell us much. Devices like these are material elements in the music of the Stravinsky school in much the same way that a Bachian pattern is a material element in Stravinsky's own music. 'The artist is a receptacle for emotions from all over the place', Picasso once remarked, 'from the sky, from the earth, from a scrap of paper, from a passing shape, from a spider's web . . . Where things are concerned there are no class distinctions. We must pick out what is good for us where we find it. . . when I am shown a portfolio of old drawings, for instance, I have no qualms about taking anything I want from them'.

If you admire someone and feel you may benefit from his well organized ways and character you may find yourself adopting some of his superficial traits when you model yourself on him. But these are not your end. They are ancillary to your



activity of probing the fundamental man, and if they are good traits there is no reason why you should not adopt them. Future musicologists, studying the works of Stravinsky and, perhaps, his school, will be able to make a legitimate study out of tracking down these traits to their sources. This is not my concern.

The sheer exploitation of diatonic principles, however much they may be subjected to new ends, suggests to some people that classical composers are being evoked even when there is no such intention. It is their historical conditioning that makes them want to place any diatonic music in a chronological position anterior to chromaticism. Also, there is a tendency to consider all diatonic composers of our time as being united under one banner and the chromaticists under another. This division ignores the elusive internal attributes of Stravinsky's music that are not present in the music of his most prominent contemporaries, though they share his general character as a diatonicist.

Such a categorical division is further perturbing to an enlightened disciple of Stravinsky since it leaves room for including the academician on his side. The academician, who often carries the tag of 'neo-classicist' more suitably than Stravinsky or his disciples, is devoted to classical principles (if he has not succumbed to conservatoire Romanticism) because he has led a sheltered life in the conservatoire where he closed his ears to the stormy musical proceedings of the first decades of this century. Stravinsky's American disciples, with few exceptions, were acutely aware of those proceedings and went through periods of being directly influenced by them. Even when they had reacted against them they never quite cast them off, which obviously invests their music with the quality of having tasted of the fruit.

Still, members of the Stravinsky school are sometimes regarded in somewhat the same indulgent way as the pedant. Listeners set themselves up as the arbiters who are to determine the precise degree of novelty the artist requires in his idiom to produce a unique work. But this is really *his* problem, not theirs. His choice of techniques whose modes of development are so well established that they threaten to carry him along familiar channels may simply make it more difficult to succeed. But they do not make it impossible, unless, of course, he is content with mere exercises which, in the words of the American aesthetician, D. W. Prall, are only 'works of art in the derivative sense, reproductions, with slight and sometimes even unconscious modification, of compositions or of structural units familiar to artists and often familiar enough to laymen'. Thus, 'instead of taking their origin in an artist's own peculiar purpose, the purpose that defines activity as artistic, their function is the exhibition of a structure of a given sort, the exemplification of a definition that has been given by the works of others'.

Any member of a school that has special concern with tradition must heed well the warning implied by such a statement. Yet I admit it is a statement not easily reconcilable with the following one that Shapero has made: 'As the composer continues to work exercises in imitation of models he will be surprised to find that

along with the thousand subtleties of technique he will absorb from his masters, he will discover the personal materials of his own art'. But Shapero is, in a way, the most problematic representative of the whole movement. His forceful creative gifts have been acknowledged, yet he is apt lately to dally so precariously on the borderline between conservatoire practice and a fully-fledged composer's flair and scope that he tends to upset our traditional concepts of what makes good art. In turning from his early twelve-tone training, Shapero was obviously motivated by Stravinsky's reinstatement of classical principles and especially by the great *Symphony in C*. But the disciple carried the implications of this reinstatement to a more literal point than the master. Like certain nineteenth century composers, Shapero is acutely aware of the looming figure of Beethoven, in such works as the *Symphony for Classical Orchestra* and the two lengthy sets of piano variations.

His conformity is not unmixed with a strain of defiance. His is not the kind of conventional music that makes it easy for performers. He seems to be letting us know that he knows we think he ought to be writing in a more obviously contemporary idiom but that he feels he can derive new qualities out of what he is doing and that he has the right to attempt big works of the kind the traditional symphonists achieved. That he has developed some personal traits, though Beethoven and Stravinsky may have inspired them, becomes apparent when we recognize them as Shapero's own in the music of his disciple, Smit. Both Shapero and Smit have enormous musical facility, and it may be this that they mistake at times for creativity. Or they will set up as their aim some vast proportions dictated by late classical models and obviously have to force themselves in some instances to fill them. But Shapero has admirable control over tonal functions and structure, and in somewhat the same way that he came by this control through Stravinsky, Smit is striving to come by it through Shapero.

Fine seems to be attracted to Stravinsky for his lyricism and delicate sonority more than by matters of tonal function and structure. Virgil Thomson regards Fine as an American Sauguet. According to Thomson, Sauguet represents 'neo-Romanticism'—the revival of the intimate romanticism that prevailed among composers like Schumann, before the advent of Wagnerian grandiosity. This trend Thomson characterizes as follows: 'Spontaneity of sentiment is the thing sought. Internationalism is the general temper. Elegance is its real preoccupation'. There is, I think, in this 'internationalism', a strong French ingredient, and Fine, without specifically suggesting Sauguet or Poulenc, has a Gallic quality. His music falls very pleasantly on the ears, and has taste and polished detail. A few years ago it occurred to Fine that amiability was becoming too steady a diet with him and that some relief was in order. To this end he set himself the task of writing a twelve-tone string quartet (1952) which turned out to be an impressive work, perhaps his best to date. Since that work he has been flirting with tone-rows, and it will be interesting to see what direction his future will take. It was, I think, Fine's espousal of the twelve-tone idea that prompted Talma to adopt it. Her piano études employ the row effectively as a

vehicle for demonstrating a variety of keyboard touches. She has an excellent grasp of piano style and this was a very apt medium for her talents.

It was not, as far as I can judge, Stravinsky's recent concern with tone-rows that motivated Fine and Talma. That they should think of using twelve-tone devices at all is, of course, related to the whole general rapprochement between the Stravinsky and twelve-tone schools and the growing acceptance of twelve-tone music. Certainly, works such as Copland's *Piano Quartet* of 1950, which was a part of this broad trend, were factors in preparing the ground for Fine to write a twelve-tone quartet. But the fragmentation, permutation and wide leaps that fascinate Stravinsky, whose rows have often been diatonic or constituted, at least, of less than twelve tones, are of a variety that seems to have been suggested by Webern. These devices are not particularly evident in the twelve-tone works of Fine and Talma, who have absorbed the row-technique into their customary manner.

I doubt if the Stravinsky school would have flourished any the less in America if he had not settled there. As Americans we still feel closer to Copland, in a way, and look to Stravinsky for timeless principles. But Haieff, as I have already indicated, by virtue of his Russian origin, could attach himself to the master as uninhibitedly as Stravinsky himself, when a youth, had attached himself to Rimsky-Korsakov. Haieff falls naturally into a line that may be traced back to Tchaikovsky. He has legitimately taken certain Stravinskian devices and made them his own. The listener may be aware of their origin, but he must also grant the transformation they have undergone. Haieff's youthfulness and nonchalance are quite distinct from Stravinsky's peculiar tautness and breath-taking dynamism. There is an element that may be characterized as an almost Chaplinesque dry humour at times, and this seems to point to 'Les Six' more than to Stravinsky. Haieff, it has been said by an unusually perceptive observer, 'delights in playful manipulation of his musical materials, and has a special fondness for sudden interruptions of the musical flow with abrupt silences or unexpected leaps or brief back-trackings'. Now it may occur to one that these words are applicable to Stravinsky, too. But no one would deny that Haieff has by nature been able to venture closer to the letter of the master than the rest of us. At the same time, those who know his music realize that the words are applicable to him in a rather special sense.

Haieff's orchestra is no mere coating for materials independently conceived, and in this he has clearly learned the lesson of his master well. Counterpoints and rhythmic figures seem to originate in the process of instrumentation. Instrumental lines return to one another just when they seem to be going precariously astray; and figures are strikingly divided between pairs in a single timbre. It may be this fascination with the orchestra that has stunted his growth in other spheres, so that looking forward to a new work of his we may predict it in a few too many ways.

Foss and Dahl (both born in Germany) reached the Stravinsky school through the devious channel of mid-European orientation. Foss started composing at seven



and, discovering at fourteen the attractive qualities of the music of Hindemith (with whom he studied several years later), he turned out surprisingly convincing pastiches in this German composer's style in 1938, when he (Foss) was sixteen. They were promptly published by the influential house of G. Schirmer. I offer these details so that it may be known how much temptation there was for him to take an easy way out. He was accepted early as a composer (though he received his share of critical disapproval) and he might equally have made a distinguished career as pianist or conductor. (His steadfastness has been contrasted with Leonard Bernstein's pursuit after celebrity. Ten years ago Fine spoke of them as 'twin prodigies, the fair-haired boys of the American scene'.)

But Foss was willing to search. The painful task of freeing himself from Hindemith's autocratic domination was accomplished with a breast-beating Americanism that was also to convince us of his passion for his adopted country. The gesture was well intended, but the attitude forced. When I was first aware of references to him as a member of the Stravinsky school I thought this was a case of dividing up the musical world into the two camps I spoke of above. (In such a broad division he could, of course, not be placed on the side of the adherents of Bartók or Schoenberg.) But the discovery of Stravinsky's significance seems really to have been important for him; and the new influence has been absorbed into those that had already exerted themselves upon him. It is Stravinsky in his religious or lofty Hellenic attitude that appeals to Foss, and it suits him better than the attitude of American folklore. Perhaps we expect too much from Foss in view of his precocity. But he somehow tends to disappoint us, though he always displays the real composer's craft. It may be he is too cognizant of our expectations. For if he were less so he might not, in such a work as his *Parable of Death* (employing a Rilke text) have felt impelled to reach out prematurely for the nobility of a Bach Passion.

Stravinsky's influence, as I have said, was absorbed by the other influences in the music of Foss. But Dahl broke sharply with his past. A comparison of his woodwind quintet of 1942 with his *Concerto a Tre* of 1947 leaves no doubt that the change was beneficial for him. His undisciplined post-Romantic chromaticism and loose form gave way to finer textures and better organized wholes. I recommend his charming trio of 1947 (the *Concerto*) to listeners, but I must admit that too little of his music has been heard on the Eastern seaboard for me to have formed any substantial idea of his essential nature.

The order in which I have discussed the composers implies no value judgment of them. I have merely been working from the centre outwards according to the view I have, as a founding member, of their ties with the 'school' as such. I have already mentioned Jones's aloofness, and this is only one aspect of his general detachment from the music world, his quiet pursuit of his own creative purpose. It is very difficult for me to connect his present manner with what I recall as having been a post-conservatoire manner in his music of the period around 1940, when we were both teaching at Mills College in California. The analyst who sets himself the task

of determining the Stravinskyan ingredient of Jones's more recent works may notice the spacious sonority, the cold and mordant textures of diatonic dissonance and a liking for the sonata formula. Copland has also left an impression on Jones. But it is not easy to account for the total effect, since Jones has neatly dove-tailed so many elements of his experience—among them, the free, independent counterpoint of Milhaud that gives the music a certain general obscurity even though its materials are often simple enough. His devotion to his sincerest aims is to be admired, and it is both a deplorable and perplexing condition that he receives so little attention in America even in advanced musical circles.

It is typical of Jones that he never sounded a fanfare when he entered the ranks of Stravinsky's adherents nor did he passionately declare it his salvation. Perhaps his own thoughts on his music would help us to arrive at a certain definition of its nature. Or better, it would be nice if there were some dedicated student of his scores who was willing to work on them to wrench their secret from them.

Of Lessard and DesMarais, the young men with short composing careers, I think it best for me to say merely that they bear watching since I am not aware of any mature profile of their own in their music as yet. They enjoy the bliss of having come by a belief in Stravinsky directly and pretty much without struggle at an early stage through Boulanger's influence. The rest of us, however, though we may have been caught up first in currents that no longer seem right for us, may find comfort in a certain confidence that it was not arbitrarily or by accident or without consciousness of other possibilities of choice that we found our way.

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I have placed almost a dozen American creative musicians in a vulnerable spot, since a debt to the composer of the *Symphony of Psalms*, *Persephone*, and the *Symphony in C* is regarded as a transgression, and openly avowing it may be more shocking still. But artistic evolution need not proceed according to the same standards. After being confronted so long with composers who violently denounced their predecessors and presented their own calling card in every minuscule musical detail, critics have been conditioned to expect the same procedure. They forget that Mozart made no secret of how much he owed to Haydn, and that Bach candidly reproduced various styles of his contemporaries. The same critics who fail to penetrate the logic of an original new idiom will bemoan the absence of this originality when an original set of relations, rather than a new idiom, is the means of conveying unique feeling or ideas. Criticism would be very easy indeed if this uniqueness were but a matter of idiom. As the English humanist, T. E. Hulme long ago cautioned us, it is important to determine whether the artist has had a 'grip' over himself to prevent him from 'falling into the conventional curves of ingrained technique . . .' This may involve an intimacy that may only be acquired with the expenditure of time and effort. But who is eager to take such trouble when there is involved the risk of not being able to predict whether a new work will be significant enough to warrant so much attention?

## A NOTE ON ELLIOTT CARTER

*William Glock*

Though the main purpose of this article is to describe a rhythmic principle that appears I believe for the first time in Elliott Carter's music, I want to make it clear at once that he is anything but a laboratory worker. The three compositions of his that I know best—the *Piano Sonata*, the *'Cello Sonata* and the *String Quartet*—all impressed me deeply before I began to inquire into the novel techniques that he was using.

Carter's music is large in thought and in execution. His ideas are mature, and his treatment of them pays us the compliment of assuming that our attention will be able to parallel his own. Also that we shall add to this capacity for paying attention a certain hardness in encountering passages of extreme dissonance if he is convinced that the musical argument calls for them. Especially in the *String Quartet*, he asks the listener to 'stand up and use his ears like a man' (as Charles Ives once said (or shouted) *à propos* the music of Carl Ruggles);<sup>1</sup> and this is invigorating, because even on the first difficult acquaintance we are aware that the *Quartet* is communicating something of value. The outward signs of quality are the same as usual: the textures and outlines are so memorable that they give us a kind of direct assurance that the complexity of the argument is worth every attempt we can make to master it.

In his earlier works, Carter already shows himself, in Lou Harrison's phrase, 'sensitive to the force and weight of a well-disposed and varied rhythmic material'; but I am not aware that he uses any techniques that could not be attributed to the examples of Copland or of the English madrigalists. With the *Piano Sonata* of 1945-6, however, he takes a great stride forward, almost as though he had passed through a sudden dramatic change of musical consciousness. The first movement runs mainly at one tempo,  $\text{♩}=66$ ; but within this tempo Carter writes two kinds of music, one *Maestoso*, the other *Legato scorrevole*; and in the second kind he is evidently hearing a very rapid semiquaver ( $\text{♩}=528$ ) as his metrical unit. There are no time-signatures, and the bars vary both in length and in the grouping of the semiquavers within them. Thus the music of these quick sections has an inimitable quality, like a toccata that sways and bends and seems to consist of a perpetual subtle *rubato* because of the irregular groupings—mostly from three to eight semiquavers together, but with a preponderance of five and seven.

It may have been the size and brilliance of his undertaking in this *Sonata* that stimulated Carter to such an extent that unaccountable things happened. At all

<sup>1</sup> See *Charles Ives and his Music*, by Henry and Sidney Cowell. O.U.P., 1955.



events, I believe it was from here onwards that he began to develop his own conceptions of rhythm and of continuity. It was whilst writing his next major work, the *'Cello Sonata* of 1948, that a new principle occurred to him. In looking through the second movement (which he wrote first), he noticed how often, within two minims to the bar, the quaver groupings fell into threes; and he decided that instead of continuing to think of such groups as cross-rhythms, it would be interesting to change to a different metrical unit, i.e., to a different speed, and to accomplish this if possible by a subtle technique of transition.

In 'modulating' from one speed to another within the individual movements of the *'Cello Sonata*, Carter used the analogy of key relationships as a guide. This may be seen very clearly in the *Adagio*, where each large section has its own tempo, and the return to the opening theme is paralleled by a return to  $\text{♩} = 70$ , with which the movement began. Here I must give an example of Carter's method, at the risk of arousing those criticisms which so many musicians love to make when they suspect even the smallest degree of arithmetical practice in the works of others.

Ex. 1

The musical score example, labeled 'Ex. 1', illustrates a tempo change from  $\text{♩} = 70$  to  $\text{♩} = 60$ . The score is written for a cello and piano. The tempo change is achieved through a series of demisemiquaver groupings. Bar 10 is marked with a box and the tempo 60. Bar 11 shows a 7-beat grouping of demisemiquavers, which is then treated as a single unit for the new tempo. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p* and *smile*.

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There we see a change of tempo from  $\text{♩} = 70$  to  $\text{♩} = 60$ ; and it is achieved essentially in two ways: by simple arithmetic, and by taking the smallest note-value as unit (in bar 10) and then, on the other side of the equation, treating seven of these units as a *gruppetto*. In other words, the demisemiquavers in bar 10 are treated at face value, whilst in bar 11 they are rather a decoration of the underlying quaver pulse. In terms of notation, the length of each demisemiquaver has become 'relative' instead of 'absolute'.

This is a simple example of Carter's method, but it shows the characteristic use of 'artificial divisions', or *gruppetti*; and it is also typical in the fact that the 'modulation' does not coincide with a change in the type of metrical unit, but occurs in such a way that the player can grasp the continuity of rhythm. Because, so far as the ear can tell, it is only when the septuplets disappear in the bar *after* Example 1 that the music settles into a perceptibly slower movement; the left hand of bar 11 is still heard as a continuation from the last beat of bar 10.

The most interesting use of 'metrical modulation'<sup>2</sup> in the 'Cello Sonata occurs in the first movement, which was the last to be planned. Carter marks this movement *Moderato*, ♩=112; and it begins with a superb passage in which the 'cello spreads its melody against the steady staccato drumming of the pianoforte, coming in always a little before or after the beat with beautiful effect.<sup>3</sup> All this is in 4/4, but after a short intense climax the music suddenly swings round into Example 2.

Ex. 2

The musical score for Example 2 consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 33 to 35. The piano part (bottom staff) has a steady staccato drumming pattern, marked 'p' and 'staccato'. The cello part (top staff) has a melody with various articulations, including 'mp molto espress' and 'staccato'. The second system covers measures 36 to 40. The piano part continues with the staccato drumming, marked 'p' and 'cresc'. The cello part has a melody with various articulations, including 'p' and 'f'. The score includes measure numbers 35, 40, and 40 in boxes, and various musical notations such as notes, rests, and groupings.

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The steady drumming is still there, so are the entries before and after the beat; and we notice the same procedures as in Example 1, of treating the right hand crotchets of the pianoforte as 'absolute' and then (in bar 35) as 'relative', and of giving the 'cellist an impression of continuity by anticipating in bars 33 and 34 the

<sup>2</sup> I believe this term was invented by R. F. Goldman.

<sup>3</sup> See Carter's article on the *Rhythmic Basis of American Music*, top of page 29.

actual timing of the crotchets in bars 35 to 40. What is new, however, is the more complex rhythmic ensemble. The left hand octaves of the pianist sound at equal intervals from bar 33 to bar 40; but first they appear as syncopations against the steady crotchets of the right hand, and then (bar 35 onwards) as first and third beats in a tempo of  $\text{♩} = 89.6 (112 \times \frac{4}{5})$  with the by now familiar *gruppetto* as cross-accented accompaniment. In bar 41 the pianist's right hand again has 'absolute' values, and the left hand octaves therefore sound closer together, as first, third and fifth beats in  $\text{♩} = 112$ .

By this time, Carter had developed the chief techniques of 'metrical modulation', but had used them only in an applied sense; he had worked by analogy with already established principles of design, and had not yet imagined the possibility of writing a piece where changes of speed would be embedded in the very material of the music, and where the interrelation of one speed with another would become a dramatic factor of such importance that the music could not be allowed to stop and then begin again at another tempo. That would destroy the 'circle'. Carter faced this problem, and found a daring solution to it, in his *String Quartet*. Like the *Cello Sonata*, it has four movements; but the music breaks off only twice, and both times in the *middle* of a movement. The first break is shown in Example 3.

Ex. 3

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a string quartet. The first system, labeled '540' in a box, consists of four staves with complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings including *mf*, *pp*, and *p*. The second system, labeled 'II' and 'ALLEGRO SCORREVOLE ♩ = 135', also consists of four staves with similar rhythmic complexity and dynamic markings like *p*, *mf*, and *f*. The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks.



As the reader will notice, bar 540 of the old 'movement' has just come into sight again as the example ends. What Carter does is to retrace (with small variations) the last eight bars before the break; and in doing so he reminds us of the technique of overlapping that was often used in the days of short-playing gramophone records, so that in turning over from one side to another we should have the illusion of continuity. Why does Carter wish for this illusion, and why does he deliberately stop in the middle of a movement? I think there are two answers—one practical, and one that is fundamental to the nature of the work itself. The first answer is that an audience must be given some respite if it is to grasp a musical argument of great toughness and difficulty lasting forty-five minutes. Otherwise I am certain that Carter would have made no break at all. The other answer follows from this. The design of the *Quartet* is determined by the process of 'metrical modulation'; that is, by the idea of having continual changes of speed and of character, and linking them into a convincing and novel continuity. Clearly the climaxes in such a design will occur at those moments when one movement merges into another; to break off just then would be to contradict the purpose of the whole work, and therefore the breaks must come where a resumption can be made in the same tempo.

I have taken this rather drastic detail as an example of Carter's boldness in following out the idea of 'metrical modulation' to its logical conclusion. Elsewhere he advances far beyond the '*Cello Sonata*' by writing a *counterpoint* of different speeds; the instruments 'modulate' at different moments, or make different 'modulations' at the same moment. A texture of this kind must need endless thought and planning, and it seems to presuppose that the individual parts will preserve a clearcut independence of rhythm.<sup>4</sup> Consider Example 4 for a moment.<sup>5</sup> It does not show layers of different speeds emerging and disappearing, indeed the four instruments have one and the same time-signature. Nevertheless, it does illustrate certain essential principles. The *Quartet* has just opened with a 'cello solo, the second violin entering at bar 12 and cutting across the broad 4/4 path of the 'cello with a pattern of dotted quavers. Then follows a 'metrical modulation' from ♩=72 to ♩=120, achieved by similar methods to those already used in the '*Cello Sonata*'; and it is at the moment of reaching ♩=120 that Example 4 begins. Several things may be noticed: the wide spacing of the instruments; the independent character of each part; and the counterpoint of four different modes of progress carried through consistently until bar 26 (1st violin) and bar 27 (2nd violin and 'cello). In short, the four parts are contrasted in register, in outline, in expression and articulation, and in rhythm. And textures of this kind often occur during the course of the *Quartet*, though with psychological insight Carter varies the passages of 'independent' writing with others that come closer to having one overall rhythm; and as the work progresses, so the rhythmic ensemble tends (rightly) to become less complex.

Thus the imitative counterpoint of the *Allegro scorrevole* (Example 3) might be seen as a conventional element in relation to the work as a whole; it is significant that this swift (and amazing) Scherzo contains no 'metrical modulations' at all. Those appear in the Trio.

<sup>4</sup> See overleaf.

## Ex. 4

The musical score for Example 4 consists of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 22-24) includes a treble staff with a tempo marking of *(♩ = 120)*, a *pizz.* instruction, and dynamics of *mp tranquillo*, *f marc.*, and *mf*. The second system (measures 25-27) includes a treble staff with a *(poco)* marking, a *cresc.* instruction, and dynamics of *f marc.* and *mf*. The bass staff in the second system includes a *mf sub.* marking and a *juste e cant.* instruction. The score is written in 4/4 time and features various musical notations including triplets, slurs, and accidentals.

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It is strange and rather interesting to discover that nearly six hundred years ago certain French composers were exploring some of the same rhythmic possibilities as Carter. In the volume of *French Secular Music of the Late Fourteenth Century*, published in 1950 and edited by Willi Apel, one finds (e.g., in Matheus de Perusio) the same delicate procedure of placing notes just before or just after the beat, the same technique of writing extended passages in which the various voices have different modes of progress, and in general, the same 'considerable degree of independence' in the individual parts—'rhythmically as well as harmonically', as Apel says in his preface. Some of these three-part *Ballades* are indeed hardly easier to read than Example 4. Thus one need not think of Carter as another twentieth century composer seeking innovation at any price. The same urge to discover new rhythmic relationships and new methods of achieving continuity has arisen before, and will arise again. The true criterion is whether the music says something worth saying. In Carter's case there seems no doubt on this point, for one can hardly help being impressed by the intensity of expression and by the imaginative power of the music, in terms both of sheer sound and of grandeur and subtlety of organization.

## SOME ASPECTS OF TWELVE-TONE COMPOSITION

*Milton Babbitt*

To disdain an alliance with those journalist critics, official composers, and custodians of musical patronage who regard the mere presence of 'twelve tones' as sufficient evidence of a fall from musical grace, or, on the other hand, with that smaller group—created, perhaps, by understandable reaction—which regards the same phenomenon as a necessary and sufficient condition for the presence of profound musical virtues, is to deny oneself the possibility of making any convenient summary of American twelve-tone music. For American twelve-tone composers, in word and musical deed, display a diversity of 'idioms', 'styles', compositional attitudes and accomplishments that almost seems calculated to resist that segregation by identification which many of their enemies, and some of their friends, would impose upon them. If this extreme diversity is, to some degree, a reflection of that multiformity which characterizes all aspects of American cultural life, it is also symptomatic of the relative isolation in which each composer pursues his own work and determines his own direction. The interaction of ideas and influences that probably would be produced by a wide knowledge and intimate understanding of each other's work can scarcely exist when this body of music goes largely unpublished, unrecorded, and unperformed by the larger orchestras or by the widely known and travelled chamber music groups. In this respect, it must be added, twelve-tone music suffers only slightly more than other 'difficult', 'advanced' music—to the extent that the label itself supplies a basis for automatic rejection; for the American 'music lover's' conservatism, a conservatism of ignorance rather than of considered choice, is nurtured and fostered by performers, concert managers, and Boards of Directors, for their own comfort, convenience, and profit.

Finding oneself a member of a minority within a minority may provide solace for but few composers; observing 'unintelligible' music from abroad being treated with respect and awe while comparable American music produces only anger and resentment may result in nothing more substantial than righteous indignation, while the realization that, if one's own music is performed infrequently if at all, the last three works of Webern are yet to be heard in New York, provides chilly comfort. Nevertheless, the number of twelve-tone composers here, as elsewhere, continues to increase.



The strategic date in the pre-war development of twelve-tone composition in the United States was that on which Schoenberg arrived here in 1933. Prior to that time, only the compositions of Adolph Weiss—Schoenberg's first official American student in Germany—and the *Dichotomy* of Wallingford Riegger had directed any attention to the American manifestations of twelve-tone composition, and Weiss soon became less associated with composition and more with performance, while *Dichotomy* remained a relatively singular work in Riegger's output until about 1943, when he became more closely identified with twelve-tone music.

Schoenberg's residence in the United States affected the musical climate not only because of his mere physical presence, or his activity as a teacher, but also, and primarily, because of the increased interest in, and performance of his music that resulted. The arrival of Ernst Krenek, five years later, added another figure who, through his writing and teaching as well as his music, directed attention to twelve-tone composition. Before the outbreak of the war, a number of young American composers—including George Perle, Ben Weber, and the present writer—were identified with the 'twelve-tone school'.

Since the war, the music of such composers as Erich Itor Kahn, Kurt List, Jacques Monod, Julius Schloss, and Edward Steuermann—whose careers had begun in Europe—have been relatively widely heard, while among the 'natives', Robert Erickson, Richard Maxfield, Dika Newlin, George Rochberg, and Keith Robinson are but a few of those whose music is evidence of the creative interest in twelve-tone composition among the younger composers.

In addition, there are those composers—including the most widely known—who have indicated their awareness of and interest in twelve-tone composition, either in an isolated work, or by frequently employing certain techniques that are associated generally with twelve-tone music.

The above list of composers is neither complete nor presumed to be representative or selective. As has been indicated, no one can be in a position to possess adequate enough and accurate enough information to compile a comprehensive list. Very likely there are composers often performed and exerting real musical influence whose music is unknown beyond a specific locality.

For this, and other obvious reasons, the present article, rather than including the customary descriptive catalogue—consisting of the names of composers whose music is of necessity scarcely known to the readers of the article, attached to adjectival paragraphs and four-bar musical quotations that possess meaning only to the extent that they are misleading—will concern itself with a brief presentation of the sources and nature of one significant phase of twelve-tone activity in the United States that should be of particular interest to non-American readers for its obvious relation—in intent, if not in inception and method—to a widespread and more highly publicized development on the Continent.

The first explicit steps in the direction of a 'totally organized' twelve-tone music were taken here some fifteen years ago, motivated positively by the desire for a completely autonomous conception of the twelve-tone system, and for works in which all components, in all dimensions, would be determined by the relations and operations of the system. Negatively, there was the motivation by reaction against the transference to twelve-tone composition of criteria belonging to triadic music.<sup>1</sup> The specific bases, discussed below, for achieving a total twelve-tone work, were arrived at by the end of the war, and when, a short time later, there were reports of a group of young French, Italian and German composers who apparently shared like aims, their work was eagerly awaited. However, their music and technical writings eventually revealed so very different an attitude toward the means, and even so very different means, that the apparent agreement with regard to ends lost its entire significance. The most striking points of divergence can be summarized in terms of the following apparent attributes of the music and the theory associated with it. Mathematics—or, more correctly, arithmetic—is used, not as a means of characterizing or discovering general systematic, pre-compositional relationships, but as a compositional device, resulting in the most literal sort of 'programme music', whose course is determined by a numerical, rather than by a narrative or descriptive, 'programme'. The alleged 'total organization' is achieved by applying dissimilar, essentially unrelated criteria of organization to each of the components, criteria often derived from outside the system, so that—for example—the rhythm is independent of and thus separable from the pitch structure; this is described and justified as a 'polyphony' of components, though polyphony is customarily understood to involve, among many other things, a principle of organized simultaneity, while here the mere fact of simultaneity is termed 'polyphony'. The most crucial problems of twelve-tone music are resolved by being defined out of existence; harmonic structure in all dimensions is proclaimed to be irrelevant, unnecessary, and perhaps, undesirable in any event; so, a principle, or non-principle, of harmony by fortuity reigns. Finally, the music of the past—and virtually all of that of the present, as well—is repudiated for what it is not, rather than examined—if not celebrated—for what it is; admittedly, this is a convenient method for evading confrontation by a multitude of challenging possibilities, including—perhaps—even a few necessities. This latter represents a particularly significant point of divergence from the development to be considered here, which has its specific origins in the investigation of the implications of techniques of the 'classics' of twelve-tone music. Indeed, it is a principle that underlies the bulk

<sup>1</sup> e.g., that of consonance and dissonance, carried over from a domain where the structure of the triad is the criterion of intervallic stability to a domain where the triad has no such prior function, and where—thus—criteria of consonance and dissonance, if the terms have any meaning whatsoever, must be determined by principles relevant to twelve-tone phenomena. The same applies to the transference of the external 'forms' of triadic music to twelve-tone contexts, resulting in a divorce of these 'forms' from their essential tonal motivations; this, at best, leads to a merely thematic formalism, and if one is seeking mere formalisms, there are certainly more ingenious ones than 'sonata-form', 'rondo-form', etc., for all that they might not possess this purely verbal identification with the hallowed past.

of Schoenberg's work (namely, combinatoriality),<sup>2</sup> and another, superficially unrelated, principle occupying a similar position in the music of Webern (derivation), that have each been generalized and extended far beyond their immediate functions, finally to the point where, in their most generalized form, they are found to be profoundly interrelated, and in these interrelationships new properties and potentialities of the individual principles are revealed.<sup>3</sup>

Quite naturally, it was the 'early American' works of Schoenberg that were the most influential. As an example of a typically suggestive, but by no means unusual, passage, consider the opening measures of the third movement of the *Fourth Quartet*. Even a cursory examination reveals a number of significant techniques of local continuity and association: the exploitation of ordered adjacencies (the repeated adjacencies C-B of bar 619 and Gb-F of bar 617 cross-associate with the opening two notes of the movement and the Gb-F of the first violin in bar 621 to effect the closure of a structural unit; the three-note adjacency C-B-G of 619 also registrationally duplicates the first three notes of the movement), delinearization (the dyads of the first violin line of 620-1 are distributed among the three instruments that immediately follow), intervallic preparation and association (the simultaneously stated fourths of 619, 620 and 621 prepare the predefined fourth of the cello and viola in 623; the repeated C-B states with regard to the G in 619 the intervallic succession continued by the relation of the D $\sharp$ -E to the B in the same measure), motivic progression (the joining of forms of the set in 618 gives rise to the motive stated in the prime set itself by the last three notes, and the third, fourth, and fifth notes; the distribution of the elements of the inverted set between second violin and viola in 623 results in a three-note motive in the second violin which is the retrograde inversion of notes five, six, and seven of the simultaneously stated prime, at precisely the same total pitch level, and at the same time, the resultant viola line reveals two semiquaver groups of four notes each which symmetrically permute the minor second and major third), functional 'orchestration' (the six-note unit of the first violin in 620-1 combines with the six-note unit of 622-3 to form a set), etc. But of far greater systematic significance, and far more susceptible to extension, is the familiar Schoenbergian principle of constructing a set in which linear continuity can be effected between sets related by the operation of retrograde inversion, by equating the total, unordered<sup>4</sup> content of corresponding hexachords at a specific transpositional level. Such a set created by this ordering of hexachords supplies the basis of progression in bars 616 to 619, and, in general, such 'secondary set' construction supplies a basis of progression beyond mere set succession. A necessary corollary of this structural characteristic is that inversionally related forms of the set, at the specific transpositional

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 6.

<sup>3</sup> Much of the remainder of this article is a highly condensed version of certain sections from the author's *The Function of Set Structure in the Twelve-Tone System* (1946), and *The Structure of the Twelve-Tone System* (in preparation).

<sup>4</sup> i.e., the total pitch content, without considering the order.



interval, possess no notes in common, and therefore span the total chromatic, thus creating an 'aggregate'.<sup>5</sup> In bar 623, successive aggregates are formed by the simultaneous statements of the prime form in the cello and the inverted form in the viola and second violin.

In almost all of his twelve-tone works (indeed, in all of his twelve-tone works of this period) Schoenberg employed a 'semi-combinatorial set'<sup>6</sup> of the type just described; in his later works, his increased preoccupation with the hexachord as an independent unit led to his using it often without regard to fixed ordering, but merely with regard to total content. Strangely, he never used the other two types of semi-combinatorial sets: that which gives rise to secondary set relationships between inversionally related forms of the set, and thus, aggregates between retrograde inversionally related forms, or that which gives rise to secondary set relationships between retrograde related forms, and thus aggregates between prime related forms. (Obviously, any set creates aggregates between retrograde related forms, and secondary sets between prime related forms.)

The structural significance of such sets suggests a generalization to the construction of sets in which secondary set and, thus, aggregate structures obtain between any two forms of the set. There are six such 'all-combinatorial' source sets, here indicated arbitrarily as beginning on the note C, for purposes of easy comparison:

- (1) C-C#-D-D#-E-F / F#-G-G#-A-A#-B
- (2) C-D-D#-E-F-G / F#-G#-A-A#-B-C#
- (3) C-D-E-F-G-A / F#-G#-A#-B-C#-D#
- (4) C-C#-D-F#-G-G# / D#-E-F-A-A#-B
- (5) C-C#-E-F-G#-A / D-D#-F#-G-A#-B
- (6) C-D-E-F#-G#-A# / C#-D#-F-G-A-B

It must be emphasized that these are 'source sets',<sup>7</sup> and that any ordering, to effect a specific compositional set, may be imposed on either hexachord without

<sup>5</sup> 'Secondary set' and 'aggregate' are necessary terms to define elements that arise compositionally, but are not pre-defined systematically. A secondary set (for example, that defined by the second hexachord of the prime set and the first hexachord of the inversion at the required transposition) is, indeed, in the strictest sense, a set, since it states a total ordering of the twelve tones; however, it is not necessarily equivalent to a derived set, nor is it ever one of the fundamental forms of the set. Of course, it can be thought of as a linear juxtaposition of parts of primary forms of the set. An aggregate can be thought of as a simultaneous statement of such parts, but in essence it is very different, since it is not a set, inasmuch as it is not totally ordered, because only the elements within the component parts are ordered, but not the relationship between or among the parts themselves.

<sup>6</sup> 'Semi-combinatoriality' indicates the property of creating such secondary sets, or aggregates, between a specific pair of forms (in the case of hexachordal semi-combinatoriality); 'all-combinatoriality' denotes the possibility of constructing such secondary sets or aggregates among any pairs of forms of the sets, at one or more transpositional levels. 'Combinatoriality' is the generic term including both the others.

<sup>7</sup> 'Source set' denotes a set considered only in terms of the content of its hexachords, and whose combinatorial characteristics are independent of the ordering imposed on this content.

affecting the combinatorial properties. Among these six source sets, beyond many other secondary bases of similarity and dissimilarity, the first three sets possess the common property of creating combinatorial relationships at one and only one transpositional interval; they are thus termed 'first order' sets. Set (4) possesses two such interval levels, and is termed 'second order'; set (5), of 'third order', possesses three such levels; set (6), of 'fourth order', possesses six such levels. There is an inverse relationship between the multiplicity of these functional transpositions and the intervallic content within the hexachord. Thus, first order sets exclude one interval, second order sets exclude two, third order sets exclude three, and fourth order sets exclude six. As a result, all-interval sets, for example, can be constructed only from first order sets; even so, there is basically only one independent all-interval set that can be constructed from each first order source set. (This excludes such sets as that of the first movement of Berg's *Lyrical Suite*, which uses the elements of set (3), though not combinatorially. This set is a derived set, as defined below, since the two hexachords are related by retrogression.)

It is of interest to note that Schoenberg employed set (5) in his *Suite*, op. 29, but only as if it were merely semi-combinatorial; however, in his last, unfinished work, *The First Psalm*, he used the same source set, but the 'set table' indicates his awareness of the total combinatorial resources of the set.

In addition to the value of such sets in effecting an interrelation of the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' far beyond mere identity, in generating fixed units of harmonic progression within which the components can in turn generate associative and variable relationships, and in determining transpositional levels, there is a far more fundamental aspect, in that a hierarchy of relationships exists among these sets as determinants of regions, an hierarchical domain closely analogous to the 'circle of fifths', and defined similarly by considering the minimum number and the nature of the pitch alterations necessary to reproduce source sets at various transpositional levels. For example, in set (1), the transposition of note C by a tritone—the excluded interval—or the similar transposition of the symmetrically related note F, reproduces the set structure a half step lower in the latter case, or a half step higher in the former case, with maximum association of content to the original set. Thus, any degree of motion away from the pitch norm is measurable. Also, the motion from the region whose structure is defined by one such source set to that defined by another source set is achieved and measured in precisely the same manner. For example, the transposition of the note C# in set (1) by a tritone results in set (2); likewise, the symmetrically related E, when so transposed, results in set (2). These properties suggest that whether the source sets are used as specific compositional sets or not, they possess properties of so general a nature as to warrant their presence as implicit structural entities.

An investigation of the six all-combinatorial source tetrachords reveals a hierarchical universe analogous to that of the hexachord. There are four such tetrachords of first order, one of second, and one of third order. An understanding of

their implications, and of those of the analogous trichordal units, together with the interrelationships among all types of combinatoriality, though fruitful enough in itself, leads one inevitably to a consideration of the technique of derivation.

Although this technique has often been used independently, it is only when considered in relation to combinatoriality that its extraordinary properties are fully revealed. Consider the set, so characteristic of Webern, that is used in his *Concerto for Nine Instruments*. It is presented in four three-note units: B-B $\flat$ -D, E $\flat$ -G-F $\sharp$ , G $\sharp$ -E-F, C-C $\sharp$ -A; the first 'prime' three-note unit is followed by its retrograde inversion, its retrograde, and its inversion. Though Webern uses this set as his total set, it is obviously possible to apply this technique to a three-note unit of any set, and thus—by the operations applied to the total set—generate a derived set.<sup>8</sup> Any three-note unit—with the exception of the 'diminished triad'—can generate such a set,<sup>9</sup> and, in terms of the total content of hexachords, three independent sets can be generated. Of these, at least one is all-combinatorial. Of the twelve permutationally independent three-note units that exist, two generate one all-combinatorial set each, seven generate two, and two generate three (indeed, one of these latter two can generate four, though obviously not within the trichordal permutation of a single derived set). For example, the set of the Webern Concerto, though not so utilized,<sup>10</sup> is a representation of source set (5); by interchanging the second and fourth units, we have a representation of source set (1). The eleven three-note units are individually unique with regard to the combinatoriality of the source sets represented by their derived sets, so that a given three-note unit of a set is a unique means of effecting change of both functional and structural areas. Consider a set constructed from source set (1), with the following initial hexachord: C-E $\flat$ -D-E-C $\sharp$ -F. The first three notes can generate derived sets of combinatoriality defined by source sets (1) and (2). Considering the first possibility, if we choose as the transpositional level for the three-note unit that defined by its pitch level in the original set, we derive the following initial hexachord: C-E $\flat$ -D-D $\flat$ -B $\flat$ -B, which is a transposition of the original combinatorial structure; on the other hand, the original three-note unit, if transposed to D-F-E, could have generated a hexachord at the same pitch level as that of the original set; this, in turn, establishes a new transpositional level for the original tetrachord, beginning on D. The original three-note unit also can generate the hexachord: C-E $\flat$ -D-G-E-F, and thereby establish the combinatorial region defined by source set (2).

In this manner, the functional and structural implications of a compositional set can be determined by the derivational interrelationships of such units, in relation

<sup>8</sup> A derived set is *not* a new set in the composition. It can be thought of, also, as resulting from the juxtaposition of segments from the fundamental forms.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the triad C E G, A F D, C $\sharp$  A $\sharp$  F $\sharp$ , G $\sharp$  B D $\sharp$ . (Observe that this is also an all-combinatorial set.)

<sup>10</sup> Webern does not exploit the combinatorial properties of this set; he does not create progression through secondary sets or aggregates, nor does he determine his transpositions in terms of such properties.



to the original set, and to each other, as defined hierarchically by the total domain of source sets.

As there are combinatorial trichords, tetrachords, and hexachords, so are there three-note generators, four-note generators, and six-note generators;<sup>11</sup> the extraordinary interrelationships that exist within and among the domains so defined emphasize the essential significance of the inherent structure of the set, and the unique compositional stage represented by the fact of the set, as the element with regard to which the generalized operations of the system achieve meaning, and from which the progressive levels of the composition, from detail to totality, can derive.

The twelve-tone structuralization of non-pitch components can be understood only in terms of a rigorously correct definition of the nature of the operations associated with the system. In characterizing the prime set, it is necessary to associate with each note the ordered number couple—order number, pitch number, measured from the first note as origin—required to define it completely with regard to the set. Then, as transposition is revealed to be mere addition of a constant to the pitch number, inversion—in the twelve-tone sense—is revealed to be complementation mod. 12 of the pitch number. (In other words, pitch number 4 becomes pitch number 8, etc.; naturally, interval numbers are also complemented.) Likewise, retrogression is complementation of the order number, and retrograde inversion is complementation of both order and pitch numbers. Any set of durations—whether the durations be defined in terms of attack, pitch, timbre, dynamics, or register—can be, like the pitch set, uniquely permuted by the operations of addition and complementation, with the modulus most logically determined by a factor or a multiple of the metric unit.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the rhythmic component, for example, can be structured in precisely the same way, by the identical operations, as the pitch component; rhythmic inversion, retrogression, and retrograde inversion are uniquely defined, and combinatoriality, derivation, and related properties are analogously applicable to the durational set. The result can be a structuring of all the durational and other non-pitch components,<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> i.e., 3, 4 or 6-note units which serve to generate derived sets.

<sup>12</sup> 'Set of durations' means specifically a 'set' in the sense of twelve-tone set. By durations defined in terms of attack, is meant the time that elapses between actual attacks, measured in terms of a fixed unit of durational reference. Likewise, timbral duration is defined by the duration of a certain timbre or, conceivably, of related timbres. The same with registrational durations.

<sup>13</sup> The question of structuralizing non-pitch elements is certainly a very complicated one. If, for example, a rhythmic set is constructed with combinatorial characteristics, then secondary set structure, aggregate structure, derived set structure can all be arrived at in precisely the same manner as with pitches. The specific use of these means would depend upon the pitch structure of the composition.

The 'form' would arise out of the specific implications of the set itself, in terms of its total content, the content of the derived sets which its generators give rise to, the transpositional levels to which the derived sets lead, etc.

Naturally, this does not mean to say that a given set uniquely implies a given composition, but rather that a given set defines, in these terms, certain general possibilities which are uniquely associated with this set.

determined by the operations of the system and uniquely analogous to the specific structuring of the pitch components of the individual work, and thus, utterly nonseparable.

Even this extremely incomplete presentation should indicate the possibility of twelve-tone music, organized linearly, harmonically in the small and in the large, rhythmically—indeed, in all dimensions—in terms of the essential assumptions of the system.

Certainly, the resources indicated here do not constitute a guarantee of musical coherence, but they should guarantee the possibility of coherence. Above all, it is hoped that they serve to give at least some indication of the extraordinary breadth and depth of the twelve-tone system.

NOTE: Nearly all the footnotes to this article are answers made by the author to queries that were addressed to him. They are included in the hope that they will assist readers to grasp more clearly some of the more difficult conceptions in this (I believe) important study of twelve-tone composition. (Ed.).

## THE ABSTRACT COMPOSERS

*Virgil Thomson*

When John Cage came to New York some ten years ago out of the Far West (by way of Chicago), he brought with him a sizeable baggage of compositions. These were scored for divers groups of what are usually called 'percussion instruments', orthodox and unorthodox.

Orthodox instruments, let me explain, are those manufactured with musical intent, such as tom-toms, temple bells and the like. The unorthodox are those whose adoption by the music profession is not yet general. These include, in Mr. Cage's case, flower pots, automobile brake drums, electric buzzers, tubs of water, and many other sources of interesting and characteristic sounds. Cage's first New York concerts were given with ensembles of players using all these instruments and many more, himself conducting.

A few years later he simplified the execution of his music by devising an instrument on which it could be composed for one man. This instrument, an orthodox one with unorthodox attachments, was none other than the familiar grand pianoforte muted with screws, bits of rubber, copper pennies and the like to give a large gamut of pings, thuds and other delicate aural stimuli. As my colleague Arthur Berger has pointed out, the Cage 'prepared piano' is a conception not dissimilar to that of the one-man bands common in the jazz world. Nor has the Cage method of composition been radically altered for the solo circumstance.

This method is Cage's most original contribution to music. Designed specifically for making extended and shapely patterns out of non-tonal sounds, it is the most sophisticated method available in the Western world for composing with purely rhythmic elements and without the aid of tonal scales. To quote Lou Harrison, long an associate of Cage in percussive and rhythmic research, Cage has substituted 'chronological' for 'psychological' time as the continuing element in his music. Any composer who has ever worked with percussion has discovered that all our traditional composing methods deal with the psychological, or 'expressive' relations, among tones which have among themselves differing and *unavoidable*, acoustical relations. To make musical forms or constructions without these relations requires a substitute for them. Cage has substituted an arithmetical relation among the durations of sounds for the traditional arithmetical relation among their pitches. He has isolated rhythm as a musical element and given it an independence it did not have before.



In the last year or so he has added a further element to composition, which is chance. So secure does he feel in the solidity of his composition method that he has assayed to prove its worth under conditions the most hazardous. Last year we heard, in a concert of the New Music Society, a piece by Cage for twelve radio receiving sets. The use of fortuitously chosen material in composition has long been familiar to the visual arts. The *collage*, the spatter, the blot, the accidental texture have been exploited by painters for forty years. From Duchamp and Picasso to the latest American abstractionists the history is continuous. Music itself accepts a high part of hazard in execution; and perhaps it is from this fact that composers have not exploited its possibilities much in actual scoring.

Mozart did play around with composing machines, as well as with performing machines (like the mechanical organ, for which he wrote some very fine music); but he did not go far with them. How far Cage will go with his Chinese dice-game (for this is the game of chance by which he at present chooses the next sound and its loudness) remains to be seen. One presumes that he will renounce it if and when it ceases to be valuable, as he, the composer, judges value. But let no one think his 'Music of Changes' is wholly a matter of hazard. The sounds of it, many of them quite complex, are carefully chosen, invented by him. And their composition in time is no less carefully worked out. Chance is involved only in their succession. And that chance is regulated by a game of such complexity that the laws of probability make continued variation virtually inevitable.

Thus, in Cage's hands, the use of chance in composition gives a result not unlike that of a kaleidoscope. With a large gamut of sounds and a complex system for assembling them into patterns, all the patterns turn out to be interesting, an arabesque is achieved. In the hands of his pupils and protégés the result is not always so distinguished, simply because the musical materials employed are less carefully chosen. The method of their assembling, however, remains valid and will remain so until a better approach to rhythmic construction is discovered.

What kaleidoscopes and arabesques lack is urgency. They can hold the attention but they do not do it consistently. The most dependable device for holding attention is a 'theme' or story, the clear attachment of art patterns to such common human bonds as sex and sentiment. How far an artist goes in this direction, or in the opposite, is up to him. 'Abstraction' in art is nothing more than the avoidance of a *clear* and *necessary* attachment to subject matter. It is ever a salutary element in art, because it clears the mind of sex and sentiment. Only briefly, however. Because the human mind can always find ways of getting these things into any picture. And since the civilized mind likes to share its intensities of feeling, and since all the feelings provokable by abstract art are individual, abstract movements invariably end by attaching to themselves an intense feeling about the one thing that is consistent throughout their works, namely, a method of composition. The composition, or the method of composition, becomes the 'subject', in the long run, of all abstract art.

This has happened to the music of Cage and his followers. Its admirers, who are many (and include your commentator), tend ever to defend it as a species rather than to attach themselves to any particular piece. This has happened before. Stravinsky's neoclassic production was long a similar cause. Whether it happened just this way in the 1890's to Debussy's Impressionistic works I am not sure. We do know that something not dissimilar took place around Beethoven in Vienna, though the attendant polemics were not an attack upon intellectuality in music but rather upon an unusual degree of expressivity.

In any case, Cage and his associates, through their recent concerts at the Cherry Lane Theatre, have got the town to quarrelling again. Many find the climate of the new downtown group invigorating. Others are bothered by the casual quality of their music. They find it hard to keep the mind on. This has always been one reaction to abstract art. I am sure that Cage's work *is* abstract, in any contemporary meaning of the term. I am also convinced that its workmanship is of the best. The fact that younger men are adopting its methods, as Cage long ago took on the influence of Cowell and Varèse, means that it has become something of a movement. Myself I find it only natural that music, usually, in our time, a good quarter century behind the visual arts, should have finally acquired its own 'abstractionist' pressure group.

## EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC

*John Cage*

Objections are sometimes made by composers to the use of the term *experimental* as descriptive of their works, for it is claimed that any experiments that are made precede the steps that are finally taken with determination, and that this determination is knowing, having, in fact, a particular, if unconventional, ordering of the elements used in view. These objections are clearly justifiable, but only where, as among contemporary evidences in serial music, it remains a question of making a thing, upon the boundaries, structure and expression of which attention is focused. Where, on the other hand, attention moves towards the observation and audition of many things at once, including those that are environmental, becomes, that is, inclusive rather than exclusive, no question of making, in the sense of forming understandable structures, can arise (one is tourist), and here the word *experimental* is apt, providing it is understood not as descriptive of an act to be later judged in terms of success and failure, but simply as of an act, the outcome of which is unknown. What has been determined?

For, when, after convincing oneself ignorantly that sound has, as its clearly defined opposite, silence, that since duration is the only characteristic of sound that is measurable in terms of silence, therefore any valid structure involving sounds and silences should be based, not as occidentally traditional, on frequency, but rightly on duration, one enters an anechoic chamber, as silent as technologically possible in 1951, to discover that one hears two sounds of one's own unintentional making (nerve's systematic operation, blood's circulation), the situation one is clearly in is not objective (sound-silence), but rather subjective (sounds only), those intended and those others (so-called silence) not intended. If, at this point, one says, 'Yes! I do not discriminate between intention and non-intention', the splits, subject-object, art-life, etc., disappear, an identification has been made with the material and actions are then those relevant to its nature, i.e.:

*A sound does not view itself as thought, as ought, as needing another sound for its elucidation, as etc.; it has no time for any consideration—it is occupied with the performance of its characteristics: before it has died away it must have made perfectly exact its frequency, its loudness, its length, its overtone-structure, its precise morphology of these and of itself.*

*Urgent, unique, uninformed about history and theory, beyond the imagination, central to a sphere without surface, its becoming is unimpeded, energetically broadcast.*



*There is no escape from its action. It does not exist as one of a series of discrete steps, but as transmission in all directions from the field's centre. It is inextricably synchronous with all other, sounds, non-sounds, which latter, received by other sets than the ear, operate in the same manner.*

*A sound accomplishes nothing; without it life would not last out the instant.*

*Relevant action is theatrical (Music (imaginary separation of hearing from the other senses) does not exist), inclusive and intentionally purposeless. Theatre is continually becoming that it is becoming; each human being is at the best point for reception. Relevant response (getting up in the morning and discovering oneself musician) (action, art) can be made with any number (including none (none and number like silence and music are unreal)) of sounds. The automatic minimum (see above) is 2.*

*Are you deaf (by nature, choice, desire) or can you hear (externals, tympani, labyrinths in whack)?*

*Beyond them (ears) is the power of discrimination which, among other confused actions, weakly pulls apart (abstraction), ineffectually establishes as not to suffer alteration (the 'work'), and unskilfully protects from interruption (museum, concert-hall) what springs, elastic, spontaneous, back together again with a beyond that power which is fluent (it moves in or out), pregnant (it can appear when- where- as what-ever (rose, nail, constellation, 485.73482 cycles per second, piece of string)), related (it is you yourself in the form you have that instant taken), obscure (you will never be able to give a satisfactory report even to yourself of just what happened).*

In view, then, of a totality of possibilities, no knowing action is commensurate, since the character of the knowledge acted upon prohibits all but some eventualities. From a realist position, such action, though cautious, hopeful, and generally entered into, is unsuitable. An *experimental* action, generated by a mind as empty as it was before it became one, thus in accord with the possibility of no matter what, is, on the other hand, practical. It does not move in terms of approximations and errors, as 'informed' action by its nature must, for no mental images of what would happen were set up beforehand; it sees things directly as they are: impermanently involved in an infinite play of interpenetrations. Experimental music—

QUESTION: — in the U.S.A., if you please. Be more specific. What do you have to say about rhythm? Let us agree it is no longer a question of pattern, repetition and variation.

ANSWER: There is no need for such agreement. Patterns, repetitions and variations will arise and disappear. However, rhythm is durations of any length coexisting in any states of succession and synchronicity. The latter is liveliest, most unpredictably changing, when the parts are not fixed by a score but left independent of one another, no two performances yielding the same resultant durations. The former, succession, liveliest when (as in Morton Feldman's *Intersections*) it is not fixed but presented in situation-form, entrances being at any point within a given period of time . . . Notation of durations is in space, read as corresponding to time, needing no reading in the case of magnetic tape.

QUESTION: What about several players at once, an orchestra?

ANSWER: You insist upon their being together? Then use, as Earle Brown suggests, a moving picture of the score, visible to all, a static vertical line as co-ordinator, past which the notations move. If you have no particular togetherness in mind, there are chronometers. Use them.

QUESTION: I have noticed that you write durations that are beyond the possibility of performance.

ANSWER: Composing's one thing, performing's another; listening's a third. What can they have to do with one another?

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QUESTION: And about pitches?

ANSWER: It is true. Music is continually going up and down, but no longer only on those stepping stones, 5, 7, 12 in number, or the  $\frac{1}{4}$  tones. Pitches are not a matter of likes and dislikes (I've told you about the diagram Schillinger had stretched across his wall near the ceiling: all the scales, oriental and occidental, that had been in general use, each in its own colour plotted against, no one of them identical with, a black one, the latter the scale as it would have been had it been physically based on the overtone series), except for musicians in ruts; in the face of habits, what to do? Magnetic tape opens the door providing one doesn't immediately shut it by inventing a *phonogène*, or otherwise use it to recall or extend known musical possibilities. It introduces the unknown with such sharp clarity that anyone has the opportunity of having his habits blown away like dust . . . For this purpose the prepared piano is also useful, especially in its recent forms where, by alterations during a performance, an otherwise static gamut situation becomes changing. Stringed instruments (not string-players) are very instructive, voices too; and sitting still anywhere (the stereophonic, multiple-loudspeaker manner of operation in the everyday production of sounds and noises) listening . . .

QUESTION: I understand Feldman divides all pitches into high, middle and low, and simply indicates how many in a given range are to be played, leaving the choice up to the performer.

ANSWER: Correct. That is to say, he used sometimes to do so; I haven't seen him lately. It is also essential to remember his notation of super- and sub-sonic vibrations (*Marginal Intersection No. 1*).

QUESTION: That is, there are neither divisions of the 'canvas' nor 'frame' to be observed?

ANSWER: On the contrary you must give the closest attention to everything.

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QUESTION: And timbre?

ANSWER: No wondering what's next. Going lively on 'through many a perilous situation'. Did you ever listen to a symphony orchestra?

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QUESTION: Dynamics?

ANSWER: These result from what actively happens (physically, mechanically, electronically) in producing a sound. You won't find it in the books. Notate that. As far as too loud goes: 'follow the general outlines of the Christian life'.

QUESTION: I have asked you about the various characteristics of a sound; how, now, can you make a continuity, as I take it your intention is, without intention? Do not memory, psychology—

ANSWER: '— — never again'.

QUESTION: How?

ANSWER: Christian Wolff introduced space actions in his compositional process at variance with the subsequently performed time actions. Earle Brown devised a composing procedure in which events, following tables of random numbers, are written out of sequence, possibly anywhere in a total time now and possibly anywhere else in the same total time next. I myself use chance operations, some derived from the *I-Ching*, others from the observation of imperfections in the paper upon which I happen to be writing. Your answer: by not giving it a thought.

QUESTION: Is this athematic?

ANSWER: Who said anything about themes? It is not a question of having something to say.

QUESTION: Then what is the purpose of this 'experimental' music?

ANSWER: No purposes. Sounds.

QUESTION: Why bother, since, as you have pointed out, sounds are continually happening whether you produce them or not?

ANSWER: What did you say? I'm still — —

QUESTION: I mean — — . . . But is this *music*?

ANSWER: Ah! you like sounds after all when they are made up of vowels and consonants. You are slow-witted for you have never brought your mind to the location of urgency. Do you need me or someone else to hold you up? Why don't you realize as I do that nothing is accomplished by writing, playing or listening to music? Otherwise, deaf as a door-nail, you will never be able to hear anything, even what's well within ear-shot.

QUESTION: But, seriously, if this is what music is, I could write it as well as you.

ANSWER: Have I said anything that would lead you to think I thought you were stupid?



# MUSIC, THEATRE AND COMMERCE

## A note on Gershwin, Menotti and MARC BLITZSTEIN

*Wilfrid Mellers*

I think it was Wyndham Lewis who once said that America was merely the first country—because of its comparative youth—to become Americanized. While we hope that the American Way of Life is not necessarily implicit in the triumph of the machine, it seems possible that the physical impact of industrialism has been, in its spiritual effects, both more violent and more widespread than any of the great religious movements of history. Machine-dominated, we think, feel, act differently from our predecessors; and part of the evidence of this radical change in the human consciousness lies, of course, in the art we create and consume.

It is by now a truism that in a machine-made world we must expect to find two contradictory types of 'art' which do their best to cancel one another out. One kind gallantly (and precariously) keeps flying the flag of the human spirit; the other exploits mechanistic techniques to prostitute the spirit for material gain. By and large, the distinction is valid; but it is a tall order thus to convict an entire culture of schizophrenia. Different groups of people accept Schoenberg or Sinatra as the Music of the Twentieth Century. In the deepest sense, both may be wrong. On the other hand, there is a sense in which both are certainly right: for both these (and many other) kinds of music are made and played in our time. One may preserve the integrity of the human spirit, the other may debase it. But the human mind has never shown much reluctance to being debased; the only difference today is that machine techniques make the process easier and more efficient. Moreover, the nature of the debasement is not fortuitous. Hollywood prostitutes our feelings in the way that seems likely to yield the biggest financial return; but even commercial techniques assume the existence of proclivities that await exploitation. Though the Hollywood Dream may be shoddy compared with the myths in the light of which great civilizations have lived, we do not preserve our precious integrity by pretending that it has nothing to do with *us*. It is even possible that commercial art is beginning to develop its own inner responsibilities. *The Desert Song* is pure make believe; but the glossy American musical is unconsciously evolving codes of behaviour, even of value, which are intimately related to an industrial society. Though we may not like them, their existence cannot be gainsaid: and should make us suspicious of glib distinctions between art and commerce.

In this connexion, the case of George Gershwin is worth some comment. He was an instinctive musician, nurtured on the restricted diet (tabloid form) of Tin Pan Alley. His basic material was the thirty-two bar tune, whether in 'common' or 'three-four' time; divided into a four-bar phrase answered by a four-bar phrase, both stated twice; followed by two four-bar or four two-bar phrases of 'contrast'; followed by a repetition of the first eight bars. The no less machine-made harmonic vocabulary came from fifty or sixty years back—from (say) Massenet and Grieg, with a garnishing of Ravel sauce. Yet the songs which Gershwin wrote within this convention revivify cliché: whereas all his attempts to extend his range proved—with one exception—disastrous. In the *Rhapsody in Blue* or the *Piano Concerto* the tunes themselves are often as good as the best of Gershwin's commercial numbers; the works prove embarrassing simply because the tunes are complete in themselves, and are improved neither by spurious 'development' nor by the bits of Lisztian tinsel with which they are flimsily tied together.

Significantly, Gershwin's only successful large-scale work is his opera, *Porgy and Bess*. Here the 'numbers', as in the commercial musical, can be held together by the story: so that it is comparatively unimportant that Gershwin's constructive technique is not much less rudimentary in his opera than in his symphonic pieces. Habitually, he resorts to *ostinato* basses, rhythmic patterns, alternations of two chords and mechanical sequences in order to keep the music going; in moments of excitement he unfailingly lapses into sliding chromatics. Yet *Porgy* is a moving, even impressive work; and it is so because, for all its sophisticated facilities, Gershwin's tunes have never been more spontaneous or more fetching. These tunes cohere in dramatic intensity not because of Gershwin's crudely 'external' attempts at thematic interrelation, but because, working within commercial conventions, he has felt the drama deeply.

For all his urban glamour, he has created a folk opera about a dispossessed people, with a hero who is both a Negro and a cripple. The idiom of Broadway may pollute the authenticity of his negroid music; yet one can have no doubts as to the genuineness of the ecstatic nostalgia that pervades the score and even—in moments such as the funeral oration in Act I—revitalizes the harmonic texture. Gershwin chose a libretto, by a negro writer, which dealt with corruption, oppression, isolation, and the inviolability of a radical innocence of spirit. He was not himself a Negro or a physical cripple; but he was a poor boy who made good: a Jew who knew all about spiritual isolation, and who had opportunity enough to learn about corruption. Perhaps he wrote such captivately fresh, as opposed to cliché-ridden, tunes because even in the face of temptation he preserved, like Porgy, a modicum of radical innocence. With what one can only call a modest kind of genius, Gershwin has here created a twentieth century myth meaningful to himself: and meaningful to us, in so far as he was representative of his and our generation.

Genius does not often flourish in the environment of Tin Pan Alley. But it is not common anywhere; and Gershwin was in no way frustrated by the com-

mercialized conventions within which he worked. When Ravel said he had nothing to teach him, I think he meant what he said: that Gershwin's technique was precisely adequate to what he had in him to do. In this connexion we may compare him with Menotti, who grew up twenty years later, when the techniques of commercial music had been sophisticated by years of application to the cinema. Being highly intelligent, and technically ingenious, he adapted cinematic techniques to solve one of the basic problems of opera in a democratic society. Of its nature, opera is an elaborately stylized art which flourishes best in a society dominated by complex and 'artificial' conventions of behaviour and feeling. Menotti, taking his cue from Hollywood and from Puccini, has created an operatic stylization which seems almost as 'natural'—and therefore acceptable to a popular democratic audience—as realistic drama. In no discreditable sense he has also learned how to exploit themes that go home to his public. *The Consul* is an acutely felt, genuinely frightening vision of the dehumanized world of officialdom, with the added advantage that it can, if need be, be imbued with political significance (on either side). *The Medium* exploits both our pseudo-scientific desire to debunk the irrational and our vague yearning for supernatural excitement, if not satisfaction. Yet Menotti, who seems to have liberated commercial cliché in making it emotionally more malleable, seems to me more a product of industrialized inhumanity than Gershwin: because although his musical-dramatic technique is much more complex, the music itself is neither good nor bad, but so cinematically parasitic as to be without identity. A Gershwin tune exists in its own right; Menotti's *parlando* lyricism has no existence apart from his drama.

Obviously, theatre music ought first and foremost to come off in the theatre; but good theatre music of the past has, without exception, been able to stand, as music, on its own feet. Twenty or more years ago Marc Blitzstein wrote: 'I have heard that a theatre song, being plugged, need only be pluggable, while a concert song can take its time, make its points more musically; in other words, don't be too good a composer, and you may write a successful theatre song. It doesn't make sense to me. The good theatre songs of the past seem to have lasted, the poor concert songs seem to have died; and Time and Tarnish go their own sweet way, plucking off the cheaper products without regard to category'. It would seem that from a theatrical composer we need both Menotti's stage sense and Gershwin's instinctive musicianship. From Blitzstein himself we certainly get both: and more.

He started as a 'straight' composer who, doing the cultural tour of Europe, studied both with Nadia Boulanger and with Schoenberg. His early works, almost all disowned by the composer, were abstract to the point of vehemence: wildly protestant, dissonant, percussive, as the work of a young American, with no cultural tradition behind him, was prone to be. He turned to theatre music from inner conviction; it was useless, he felt, percussively to batter in a void; if one is going to hit out, it's as well to hit something. His musical development parallels a growing social conscience; but he gave up abstract music for fundamentally aesthetic, not political, reasons.



In *The Cradle will Rock*—his first opera, or ‘play in music’, as he called it—Blitzstein took over the framework of the commercial musical, with spoken dialogue, set numbers, and various kinds of compromise between music and drama. To this he added—as Menotti was to do later—many techniques suggested by the cinema. Music in the theatre may be background, providing ‘atmosphere’ or underlying dramatic significance, often ironically. It may be foreground, directly furthering the action through the participation of the characters in song, march or dance. Speech may pass into song; words underpinned by music may pass into action while the music carries on; silence may be used when action or phrase needs sudden or startling relief. None of these techniques was in itself new; no-one before Blitzstein, however, had used them so consistently, so coherently, and to such imaginative purpose. This remains true even though Blitzstein is the first to admit his debt, both musically and theatrically, to Kurt Weill.

All Blitzstein’s opera-books have been written by himself, in a style which invests the inflexions of American speech with the pungency and pith of art. The remarkably varied musical and dramatic treatment to which these texts lend themselves is illustrated in the Drugstore scene from *The Cradle*. It opens with spoken dialogue. The ‘druggist’ is chatting it witless contentment to his son Steve, while the orchestra plays an amiable little tune in six-eight. The lilt of this tune manages to suggest a cat-like pleasure in the warm sun, and the complacency of the little property-owner; at the same time the hovering tonality imbues the ‘little man’s’ unimaginative silliness with pathos. The tune and its harmonization tell us that he is genuinely happy, incorrigibly stupid: and pitifully vulnerable. Steve answers his pipe-dream by bringing him back to reality: what about the mortgage, he says, in an *agitato* rhythmic figuration, oscillating ambiguously between the triads of F minor and E major. This prepares the way for the appearance of the hired thug, agent of the villainous capitalist, Mister Mister, who is going to use the pull of the mortgage to involve the druggist in the frame-up of an innocent young Pole. These sinister goings-on unfold ironically, but significantly, against the complacency of the song-tune; the final machinations are entirely unaccompanied. Then Gus and his wife Sadie, the victims of the frame-up, come in, to sing a love-song, in slow waltz time, about the baby Sadie is expecting. The lyricism of this is in striking contrast to the squalor of the spoken dialogue that has preceded it; and also balances the fundamentally unfeeling, as well as unthinking, lyricism of the druggist’s tune at the beginning of the scene. Its musical and dramatic effect is thus cunningly dependent on its context.

None the less it is in its own right music of extraordinary beauty, profound in its simplicity. Its form, superficially considered, is that of the commercial number, beginning with two eight-bar clauses each of which describes a slowly rising arch; the second arch rises a fifth higher than the first. These are answered by a four-bar phrase which forms a similar, smaller arch; but whereas the original arch had grown in stepwise inevitability, this is pathetically broken in rhythm. Then there is a ‘middle section’ in which all the phrases have this fragmentary tenderness: and an instru-

mental repetition of the first section, with spoken dialogue. The effect of this caressing melody is inseparable from its subtle harmonization. It opens in tonal ambiguity—in something that might be F minor with sharp sixth but flat seventh. At the top of the second (climacteric) arch the sharp sixth becomes a dissonant bass to the harmony. The brief phrases of the middle section pass through almost continuous enharmonic modulation: and proceed back from D minor, by way of linearly related triads of C minor and E minor, to the veiled tonality of the opening. The slow, arching growth of the tune, with its warmly tranquil harmony, makes us feel, not merely Gus's tenderness, but also the growth of the child in the womb: while at the same time the ambiguity of the initial tonality, the dissonance on the high E flat, and the broken rhythm and shifting modulations of the middle section imbue the music with a sense of wonder. The song is instinct with both the beauty and the frailty of life: love itself is so intangible, the child which is love's creation will be so tiny, so unprotected. Not only musically but also psychologically the Gus and Sadie song balances the druggist's tune at the beginning of the scene. Both are happy, and frail. The Gus and Sadie song moves us so much more deeply because so much more is at stake. All this is emphasized in the dramatic context by the fact that Gus and Sadie will shortly walk out into the bomb-plot—as we know, but they don't. But the effect of the song in itself has nothing to do with this dramatic irony. Bomb or no bomb, there is still an *implicit* contrast between the tender life growing in the womb, and all the shocks that flesh is heir to.

I have analyzed this little song in perhaps extravagant detail because I know of no better example of Blitzstein's ability to achieve, within his self-imposed limitations, a range and depth of experience comparable with that of the most complex 'art' music. In *The Cradle Will Rock* most of the song numbers are much closer than this to popular convention. Sometimes, as in *Honolulu*, they guy their prototypes by reducing the clichés *ad absurdum*; sometimes, as in *Croon Spoon*, they parody the real thing only by their ironic text and by their level of musical accomplishment. The serious or ironically tragic songs usually keep to the ternary convention; but the diatonic tunes have a typical alertness and flexibility, which again prompts rapid enharmonic modulations. In *The Cradle will Rock* (the title song), the tonality suggests the uprooting, revolutionary tempest by hovering between a phrygian E minor and B flat major in the verse, and in the chorus between E flat minor and E major with chromatic alterations: ending with *fortissimo* triads of B, A, D and A flat, harmonizing a line rising by D sharp up the scale of E major. *Joe Worker* is tonally less adventurous but still more powerful. The passionate indignation of the words spills over into music which uses the rigidity of the convention to achieve a shattering force.

*The Cradle will Rock* is a satirical piece with tragic undertones; Blitzstein's second 'play in music', *No for an Answer*, is a tragedy with satirical implications. It tells a grim story of a group of New York waiters victimized by Big Business. Apart from the superb torch song and *Penny Candy*, there are fewer set 'numbers' than in *The Cradle*; or rather the song tune tends to merge into a most sensitive treatment of

speech inflexion—a kind of ‘American recitative’ in which Blitzstein reveals the roots of some aspects of jazz in American dialect. In a piece such as the character-sketch of Mike this type of vocal line provides a link between musically accompanied speech and song: the transitions are so subtle that ‘real life’ dialogue seems to dissolve into music in a way that makes Menotti’s *parlando* line seem relatively crude in range and expressiveness.

As in the earlier ‘play in music’, tenderness and strength are here allied. The Joe and Francie love scenes develop the manner of the Gus and Sadie episodes with still more delicacy: in the lovely D flat major nocturne, for instance, the static tonality and gently rocking rhythm create the security and inner serenity of love (as opposed to the cut-throat hurly-burly of the outside world), while the syncopated cross-rhythm in Joe’s vocalise exquisitely conveys the urgency of desire. This is a true mating of music and drama, for only music could thus express two apparently contradictory feelings at the same time. Moreover, compassion now embraces many of the ‘unsympathetic’ characters also. The character-sketch of Mike makes us feel both with and for the young ‘tough guy’; and the chromatic *arioso* of the rich boy Paul (‘the sky is black and blackenin’), followed by his slow waltz harmonized in rich but tremulously fluctuating sevenths, involves us, willy nilly, in the disintegration of his world. We weep for him—as he asks us to—and for his blundering good intentions: the song is at once satirical and beyond the range of parody. The strength of the fierce songs of the *Joe Worker* type is also developed, in the second opera, on an altogether grander scale, especially in the choruses. The final oration over the dead Joe is a magnificent example. The vocal line is stark and simple in its diatonicism, yet rhythmically resilient; again the movement of the parts creates an alert expectancy from enharmonic modulation. It is this element of precariousness that relates Blitzstein’s power to his sensitivity. Even when his use of patterned figurations in obsessive rhythms attains a steely monumentality there is no hint of the emotional bulldozer; it is interesting to compare these passages with Gershwin’s ‘labour-saving’ use of mechanistic rhythms.

Blitzstein’s equilibrium between power and compassion is somewhat disturbed in his third opera, *Regina*. The book of this he adapted, with characteristic concision, from Lillian Hellman’s play *The Little Foxes*; it suffers from the play’s grimly negative nature. Blitzstein’s previous works had dealt with corruption and a decaying world; but in them the positive forces of love, courage and compassion are at least an equal match for the negative forces. In *Regina* the central character is a villainess-heroine; and the action centres around the money-grubbing intrigues of the Hubbard family. Admittedly, the opera concludes with Zan’s escape from the corrupt inhumanity of the Deep South, which represents decaying capitalism in general. But though her character is drawn with great musical and psychological insight, she exists in the opera mainly as a foil to her mother. The only others for whom sympathy is invited are Horace, who is in the last stages of physical as well as moral decay; and Birdie, who is a secret drunkard. While Blitzstein makes us feel for these melancholy



creatures, such sympathy is not an adequate substitute for the relationship between Gus and Sadie, or between Joe and Francie, in the earlier works.

This criticism apart, *Regina* marks a further creative stage in Blitzstein's career. The southern setting makes it possible for him to use the negro element as a kind of choric commentary: indeed, negro life and music become an ideal representation of the simple fundamentals of the Good Life, as opposed to the savage lunacy of Regina's obsession with Things (we may recall Porgy's song, 'I got plenty o' nuttin'). This becomes explicit in the final scene, when the negroes' spiritual about the 'new life coming' is used as a counterpoint to Zan's ultimate rebellion against her mother. The jazz element in *Regina* is, however, double-edged, since the nastiest characters often sing in a bastardized idiom hovering between jazz and the Victorian salon. The manner in which a negro jazz band and a 'white' drawing-room trio are counterpointed on the stage is brilliant theatre: and provides evidence as to how the good dramatic composer has sometimes to write music which seems trivial without being so—in relation to the work as a whole.

The song 'numbers' in *Regina* are perhaps more closely wedded to the musical and dramatic structure than those in the earlier operas. A fine instance is Zan's 'What will it be for me', which looks like a somewhat corny commercial piece, but proves to be of great psychological subtlety. The first, rising phrase beautifully suggests the girl's search for the answer to adolescent dream; while the unexpected modulation to the *minor* of the dominant, and the different harmonization of the high E flat each time it appears, intimate that she is both eager and half afraid to find what she's seeking. It is significant too that this song is not just a 'number'; its relationship to the central theme of the opera is crucial. In the finale it is developed in a manner closer to traditional operatic techniques than anything in Blitzstein's previous works. It is in this sense that *Regina* marks an advance: he has reconciled his 'play in music' with something of the lyrical expansiveness and musical richness of the more conventional type of opera, and in doing so has sacrificed but little of his originality and power. *Regina* is the first work which he has specifically called an opera.

It is hardly surprising that Blitzstein should have felt that the fiercely dramatic part of Regina called for operatic range. She is almost a Verdian 'heavy' mezzo, with a range from G below middle C to C in alt; her waltz theme-song becomes a full-scale operatic aria, so titled by the composer. Most of her big dramatic moments are superbly 'operatic', not merely good theatre; her unaccompanied 'curtain-phrase' (complete with high C) at the end of Act II, after the appalling gallop during which she taunts her wretched husband, must be spine-chilling in its dramatic context. No less felicitous is the high coloratura writing given to Birdie: the vocal acrobatics emphasize the pathos of her tipsiness. She too has an 'aria' which expresses a fuddled nostalgia the more moving for being contrasted with the squalors of the present. Even in its operatic virtuosity, the vocal line remains highly personal. The orchestral writing here, with its open ninths and sevenths, suggests Copland; though the music

is very beautiful, it has not the inevitability that makes *No for an Answer* seem the natural speech of the city, transmuted into art.

So although *Regina* was a means for Blitzstein to enrich the range of his work it was, I suspect, essentially a means rather than an end. In *Reuben Reuben*, the piece he has recently completed, he returns to the industrial environment in which he feels most at home. I have seen only fragments of this score; they suggest that its style is simpler than that of any of Blitzstein's previous works—less operatic than *Regina*, less close to the commercial idiom than *The Cradle*. The satirical numbers—like the policeman's waltz-song—now have an innocent lucidity; the 'psychological' numbers now combine the 'realism' of *No for an Answer* with the more lyrical note of *Regina* (there's an extraordinarily imaginative use of jazz 'broken rhythm' in 'The Mother of the Bridegroom'). A new flavour comes into the music in the tender unison chorus 'The Moment of Love', in which the chords could hardly be simpler, though the (sometimes polytonal) contexts they appear in are strange, almost hallucinatory. Isolated fragments can tell one little, however; especially when a composer's theatrical sense is as maturely developed as Blitzstein's. So I will merely add that in *Reuben Reuben* Blitzstein is attempting to deal with 'a key temper and state of our day (anxiety tension), and to do it all in comic (almost Mozartian) style'. This, as he says, is 'a hard nut to crack'. The fusion of imaginative sympathy with objectivity which we find in his earlier works—especially *No for an Answer*—suggests that he might well have succeeded.

Blitzstein is the only composer I know of who has achieved a genuine rapprochement between 'art' music and 'popular' music: for he has shown that such distinctions are, or at least can be, meaningless. It is a pity that his political affiliations have presumably meant that his works have not found a hearing in the States over the last few years: while on the other hand the roots of his style in the American language mean that his operas are not readily transportable to other countries.

It is good news that Bernstein is to conduct *Regina* (his most exportable because most operatic piece) at La Scala, with (it is hoped) Callas in the title role. It is still better news—from every point of view—that the new piece, *Reuben Reuben*, is to be produced on Broadway next season. In any case, except for the end of his first piece *The Cradle will Rock*, Blitzstein's 'solution' to our perversities and ineptitudes is nowhere present in his works. We need to hear his music because, unequivocally accepting an industrial world, it yet speaks for understanding, love, charity (in the strict sense), and courage. He makes us feel—without minimizing the odds against us—that it is good to be alive. For that reason I feel pretty sure not merely that his historical significance is greater than we can appreciate at the moment: but also that his works will survive the apparent topicality of his approach.

NOTE: I had intended that the section on Blitzstein should be copiously illustrated with music type quotations, but copyright difficulties have made this impossible. The complete vocal score of *Regina* is published by Chappell, who also publish songs and scenes from *The Cradle Will Rock*. Perhaps readers could persuade Chappell's to import a few copies, especially of the Drugstore scene. *No for an Answer* and *Reuben Reuben* are as yet unpublished.

## LEONARD BERNSTEIN

### (1) 'Wonderful Town' (A Musical Comedy)

*Listening to popular music is manipulated not only by the promoters but, as it were, by the inherent nature of the music itself, into a system of response mechanisms wholly antagonistic to the ideal of individuality in a free, liberal society . . . T. W. ADORNO.*

*I trust the unconscious implicitly, finding in it a sure source of wisdom and the dictator of the condign in artistic matters . . . LEONARD BERNSTEIN.*

Leonard Bernstein (a pupil of Walter Piston) is the first serious composer of any stature to have entered the field of popular music since Kurt Weill took the same step fifteen years ago. I believe the event to be of some importance, particularly as Bernstein is still at the height of his powers (which Weill was not) and as he shows no signs of forsaking the world of serious music. I would go so far as to say that the responsibilities which devolve upon him in the writing of popular music at the present time are as great as, if not greater than, in the writing of a symphony. To those who have, understandably, shut themselves off from the horrors of contemporary popular music, this will seem an extravagant statement. To them (and indeed to everyone) I would recommend T. W. Adorno's essay, *On Popular Music*, published in Volume IX of *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* (New York). Despite an over-schematic view of the interrelation of commercial motive with cultural effect, Adorno's general conclusions are incontestable; and combined with those reached by F. R. Leavis and Denys Thomson in their important book, *Culture and Environment* (Chatto and Windus), they provide ample justification for the present discussion of an aspect of the cultural scene not generally covered by responsible musical journals.

The Marxist would say that the appalling condition of our popular culture is due to its neglect of the central issue of our time, the working-class struggle.<sup>1</sup> In the sphere of music, progressive artists used the commercial idiom as the starting-point for their attacks on society, and the best of them—I am thinking particularly of Kurt Weill—achieved something that was both original and strong. But the subsequent failure of certain of these artists (Eisler and Dessau, as well as Weill) to find a valid means of expressing any *positive* faith could have been predicted from the first: the musical method is as limited as the artistic outlook. The nature of these limitations becomes very clear when the music is compared with that of the

<sup>1</sup> An explicit statement of this doctrine in relation to music may be found in Blitzstein's radio *Singspiel*, *I've got the tune*.



one genuine and complete artist to have grown up *within* the tradition of contemporary popular music—George Gershwin. Now Gershwin has proved, beyond a shadow of doubt, that the cure for the ills of our popular music lies not in any ideological re-orientation, but in the exercise of an unfettered creative imagination and in the concentrated application of innate musicianship. Gershwin's place in the cultural history of our time does not depend, as some people suppose, on the snob-appeal of certain chords and progressions to be found in his later work. Rather does it derive from his instinctive understanding—evident in his earliest songs—of a principle unknown to the average commercial musician, the principle that the structure of a song must be perceived as a total musical event, distinct from any other, and that the details within the structure are only justified by the intimacy of their relation to it.<sup>2</sup>

Even in so early a piece by Gershwin as the song 'It's wonderful', from *Primrose* (1924), we find a purposeful interplay of diatonic and chromatic elements, a vital inter-relation of introductory bars, verse and refrain, and a harmonic-melodic climax arrived at in the most masterly fashion. Successes of this order, in the widest variety of contexts, were characteristic of Gershwin's entire output. If the norm of popular-musical endeavour could be brought somewhere near this level, the benefits would extend far beyond the musical sphere. The mere acquisition of a slick technique is worse than useless. What is needed is the musicianship of those who, unconsciously or otherwise, take account of what is, and what is not, 'condign in artistic matters'.

If Bernstein is truly aware of his responsibilities, his invasion of the commercial fortress is to be welcomed wholeheartedly. In technique and imagination he is well armed. However, his first Broadway musical, *On the Town*, evaded the issue: apart from the ballet (which is loosely related to *Fancy Free*) and the opening scene with its joyful bursts of polyphony, it is anonymous though harmless routine-work. *Wonderful Town* (produced at the Princes Theatre, London, March, 1955) is another matter, though there are certain passages in the score which suggest that Bernstein's 'implicit trust in the unconscious' is sometimes misplaced. It is hard, for example, to reconcile the crudity of 'Conga' or the sheer inanity of 'My darlin' Eileen' (an essay in the pseudo-Irish style) with *any* artistic standards. Either Bernstein's estimate of what is condign is at fault, or—and this is more likely—he has allowed commercial considerations to override his sense of what is fit on even this humble level. Yet these pieces seem radiant with innocence when compared with the number entitled 'Wrong Note Rag'. Lower a composer could not sink. 'It's got a little twist that simply drives you insane', says the lyric with startling honesty. The whole song is indeed miserably twisted in its infantile repetitiveness and in the sadistic, mock-sophisticated humour

<sup>2</sup> As an indication of how foreign this concept is to the commercial mind, I would cite a current hit song based on the B Minor melody with which Borodin opens his *Polovtsian Dances*. The arranger has eliminated the central section of Borodin's ternary melody, and substituted something which has no structural function whatever, and no musical identity of its own. The listener is thus absolved from the effort of apprehending as a whole what was once a good melody. Because of the opportunity it affords to relax attention, a proportion of irrelevant and meaningless material is a necessary feature of the song hit.

of its melodic distortions and harmonic accretions. Referring to the wrong-note cult in popular music, Adorno notes the tendency 'to compensate for guilt in having condoned the worthless, by making fun of it'. The position of this number at the end of Bernstein's score makes Adorno's contention all the more relevant. One hopes that a song of such stupidity will not achieve the status of a plug number. But the lyric informs us that it is 'a simple little ditty that is sweeping the town', and its popularity seems assured.<sup>3</sup>

This shameful capitulation to commercialism only serves to emphasize the value of those sections of the score in which Bernstein has retained his integrity. The orchestral interlude preceding the finale is a praiseworthy act of defiance—music of almost neurasthenic intensity that subtly contradicts the whole ethos of the Broadway musical. The four sentimental numbers all succeed in making a valid musical statement. Two of them, 'Ohio' and 'A Quiet Girl', do so without help from Gershwin, and avoid commercial cliché by returning to the ballad style of fifty years ago. The introduction of 'A Quiet Girl', however, opens in C minor with ten bars of tonic pedal—a passage that might have come from a Blitzstein song, and which is sufficiently anti-commercial to have persuaded those responsible for the London and New York productions to delete it altogether. The refrain bears a general relation to the dance, 'Billy and his Sweetheart', from Copland's *Billy the Kid*, and with the modulation to the submediant, the relationship becomes specific.<sup>4</sup> This, and other songs in Bernstein's score, show how Copland's return to folk sources may suggest a way out of the *impasse* of commercial music.

By far the best of the sentimental numbers is one entitled 'A little bit in love'. Although less complex, it displays a melodic and harmonic invention worthy of some of Gershwin's most admirable pieces. The harmonic premises upon which it is founded are again deduced from folk-song procedures, but in the delicate cross-rhythms and in the manner of the song's development, Bernstein's individual touch is always apparent. The song is in F, but the central, and strictly developmental, section sets off with charming unexpectedness in E. If the two bars of sequential progressions which eventually lead back to the tonic seem a trifle forced in the context, it is because Bernstein has momentarily forgotten to be himself, and has tried to solve the harmonic problem in Gershwin's manner. Nonetheless, the song is a valuable achievement.

The fourth sentimental number, 'It's Love', leans more heavily on Gershwin, but contains one point of individual interest that deserves mention for being an

<sup>3</sup> The fact that so many popular song lyrics inform us that 'everyone's singing it' need not be interpreted as wishful thinking on the part of the writer. Everybody *is* singing it, and has been since the formula in question was first discovered. In the present instance, the 'simple little ditty that is sweeping the town' is in reality not the song itself, but the formula (neo-ragtime) which, I am told, dates from the late forties. The 'wrong notes' are merely the stimulant which insures that the addict accepts the drug.

<sup>4</sup> cf. bars 17 *et seq.* of refrain of 'A Quiet Girl' (Chappell) and bars 33 *et seq.* of 'Billy and his Sweetheart' (Boosey and Hawkes).

example of the kind of integrated musical thinking that is unknown in professional circles. The introduction to the refrain is based on a variant of 'A little bit in love'. This is justified by the dramatic situation, and as a musical idea is not perhaps beyond the reach of a commercial hack. But it is certain that in such hands, the refrain which followed would be entirely unrelated to the introduction. Bernstein, however, insures formal unity by opening the refrain with the same root progressions that were characteristic of 'A little bit in love'.

The humorous and exuberant numbers form the most consistently personal element in the score. Here Bernstein has a much more slender commercial precedent to struggle against, and he is free to experiment with tempo relationships (in 'One hundred easy ways'), tonal juxtapositions ('What a waste'), and textures (in the admirable opening number). Perhaps the most remarkable feature of these songs is the variety of treatment which Bernstein brings to the vamped bass—a procedure undoubtedly copied from folk-sources (*cf.* certain of the songs of Charles Ives, where a similar effect is achieved, though with less musicality). Incidental details of accompaniment are always functional, and there are moments when the orchestra is used with a subtlety unique in this field.<sup>5</sup> Quite apart from the intense professionalism of these comic songs, they display a melodic invention that Bernstein's master, Copland, must envy. Their simple vigour also implies a reserve of strength. Such genuine simplicity, such rigorous economy, is something quite new in contemporary popular music, which in general is too poverty-stricken to be economical. Simplicity implies precision, and this too is often to be found in Bernstein's score. The timing of naturalistic sound and musical interjection (in 'Conversation Piece') is a theatrical idea of the first order, recalling in its sense of dramatic values the juxtaposition of music and sound with which Bernstein 'points' the embrace of Edie and Terry in *On the Waterfront*.

The commercial world has a lot to fear from a talent of such versatility. If what is bad and anti-musical in this score is the price which Bernstein has felt it necessary to pay in order to be allowed to exercise his talent, we may console ourselves with the thought that in the better parts he has succeeded in re-introducing musical values to a world that has been ignorant of them since the death of Gershwin. We must hope that these successes will encourage him, or those that follow him, to adopt a more intransigent attitude on future occasions of this kind. By intransigence I do not mean the insistence upon a more 'progressive' musical language. That has no virtue, in itself. I mean rather the steadfast refusal to submit to a convention imposed from without, and the unceasing regard for musical truth, however slight and even worthless the dramatic or poetic pretext. May Bernstein's victory over commercialism not prove a Pyrrhic one.

DAVID DREW

<sup>5</sup> This is only so of the New York production, recorded on Brunswick. Even there, Bernstein was not solely responsible for the orchestration, and the division of labour is woefully apparent.



## (2) 'On The Waterfront'

There is no English word for *Kitsch* except 'Hollywood'. The name of the place where our century's two leading destroyers of *Kitsch*, Schoenberg and Stravinsky, have created their last-period works, is the most pejorative term in the despairing critic's vocabulary. It denotes an unscrupulous approach to the problem of form, a third-hand nineteenth century style, and the kind of 'sonorous' orchestration which hides the absence of ideas instead of clarifying their development and interaction, and which is sufficiently stereotyped to be left to an 'orchestrator's' expert hands. His expertness is real as far as it goes; whereas it is doubtful, *experto crede*, whether some of the most prominent Hollywood composers would be able to score their own music, let alone invent it.

While Hollywood is flooding the worlds of sight and sound with technicolored CinemaScope and the Wonder of Stereophonic Sound respectively, there are smaller American film companies which, in the words of an indigenous observer, 'have the air of being ready to make an honest buck, and never mind the grand manner'. Elia Kazan's black and white *On the Waterfront* (1954) must, in fact, have made quite a few honest bucks, for it cannot have cost much and has proved one of the most successful films of recent years. Marlon Brando won the 'Oscar' for his performance in it,<sup>1</sup> and the British Film Academy titled him the best foreign actor. At last January's third International Film Festival at Punta del Este (Uruguay), moreover, *On the Waterfront* won the award not only for the best direction but also for the best film score. It is not often that the musician finds himself in agreement with the film critic as far as 'background' music is concerned, but in this instance agreement must be unanimous: Leonard Bernstein's music is about the best film score that has come out of America. In sheer professional skill, it surpasses everything I have heard or seen of the music of his teacher, Aaron Copland (himself one of the very few contributors of musical music to the American film), while in textural style and harmonic idiom it is more daring even than many more individual film scores by our own leading composers.

The American reaction against Hollywood was inevitable, but its success wasn't. At least two distinguished composers had reacted previously, Copland and Hanns Eisler, who wrote his anti-Hollywoodian book<sup>2</sup> in what he calls 'the lion's den', to wit Hollywood. Either reaction, however, was perhaps more convincing verbally than musically. As far as I know it, Copland's film music is at times a little half-hearted and primitive, and cannot altogether escape the charge of amateurishness.

<sup>1</sup> Since these lines were written, it has been announced that the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has awarded no fewer than seven 'Oscars' to *On the Waterfront*. In addition to individual awards for the director, the leading pair and the author of the screen play, the film has been chosen as the best picture of the year (1954), the best example of editing, and the best example of black and white cinematography.

<sup>2</sup> *Composing for the Film*, New York, 1947; London, 1951; *Komposition für den Film*, Berlin, 1942. The quotation is from the author's preface to the German edition.

As for Eisler, he has written at least one film score that contradicts what he preaches; besides, the sermon itself represents a confusing mixture of musical truth and communist irrelevance. For the rest, this gifted Schoenberg pupil has chosen to withdraw behind the Iron Curtain where, if he is a good boy, he will have to compose what is, fundamentally, the kind of music his book is against.

If 'Hollywood' and its European forerunners be considered a 'thesis' in an Hegelian sense, and Schoenberg and Stravinsky its antithesis, then the *Waterfront* score emerges as a synthesis which satisfies both cinematic and musical requirements. Bernstein's attitude is in fact as eclectic as that of the worst Hollywood composer, but he largely selects and borrows from very different styles and methods—pre-eminently those of Stravinsky and Schoenberg themselves, with Copland, Hindemith (via Piston?<sup>3</sup>), Puccini consecutives (in the last, 25th entry), folkish elements, pentatonicism (tonal penta-scale, third mode), jazz, and various European sources (probably even the 'Dawn' interlude from *Grimes* with its 'waterfront' atmosphere) into the bargain. Significantly enough, on the rarer occasions when Bernstein does approach Hollywood's usual suppliers, his eclecticism becomes strikingly inconsistent, unity flags, his art becomes artificial, his synthesis synthetic. The crassest example is the Wagnerian *sforzato* kiss in the 12th entry which contradicts its context in every respect, structural, textural, and emotional (overstatement). For the rest, the fact that Stravinsky and Schoenberg made their home in Hollywood may, after all, be of more than geographical significance; are not geography and chronology two axes in that system of co-ordinates which we call history?

The field in which, after much antithesis, Schoenberg and Stravinsky have finally shown their common historical function is that of polyphony, and it is indeed the largely contrapuntal texture of the *Waterfront* score that constitutes a momentous historical event in the realm of the most modern of all arts which, on the musical side, has hitherto shown a predilection for the most outmoded homophony. From the single thematic line with which the title music opens and the ensuing two-part canon at the octave, it is clear that Bernstein is determined to subject the Hollywoodian sound track to a radical spring-cleaning. Parallel to the contrapuntal method runs a panchromatic<sup>4</sup> harmonic style that seems to derive from the 'new expressive chromaticism' which Gradenwitz<sup>5</sup> notes in *The Age of Anxiety* (1948-9); whereas the pan-diatonic approach (Stravinsky, Copland) in sections where the contrapuntal method is relaxed would appear to stem from earlier procedures (*Jeremiah Symphony* (1942), *Fancy Free*).<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the panchromatic motive power does not confine itself to the contrapuntal stretches, but also promotes some chordal developments. There is, for instance, an atonal chordal build-up which, without availing

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Peter Gradenwitz, *Leonard Bernstein*, in *The Music Review*, vol. x, no. 3, August, 1949, p. 198.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it may be mentioned in passing that readers should beware of the new *Grove's* article on *Panchromaticism* which is factually quite absurd.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 200.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 196 ff.

itself of all the twelve notes, is unmistakably influenced by dodecaphonic technique (of the kind best known in this country from Humphrey Searle's *Poem* for 22 strings). This is indeed the distinctive feature of the *Waterfront's* panchromaticism: it is noticeably post-dodecaphonic, not pre-dodecaphonic, like panchromaticism proper.

The contrapuntal method largely determines the anti-Hollywoodian instrumentation, which is in the Mahler-Schoenberg tradition inasmuch as it throws contrasting parts into relief at the expense of conventional sonority, and in the Stravinsky tradition in that, with one or two exceptions, expressive suppression is at a premium, despite the fact that Bernstein's is a more sentimental creative character. Wind and percussion (including the piano)<sup>7</sup> are treated as the new instruments which they have become through Stravinsky, and even the jazzy and swingy elements have travelled via Stravinsky, whence Gradenwitz's suggestion that Bernstein (among others) is 'fully American-grown and detached from the immediate and direct influence of European cultural and musical life'<sup>8</sup> seems slightly out of focus.

Among the more individual traits of Bernstein's scoring is his well-formed habit (ultimately rooted in Schoenberg) of changing his instrumentation in midstream in order to clarify structural developments; with the unerring instinct of the innately practical musician, he has realized that not only textural, but also structural X-raying and spot-lighting is doubly necessary in the cinema, where the music does not call, but has to recall the attention.

While, however, his romantic nature invests his 'cold', transparent scorings with hypnotic warmth, conventional structures without much meaning tend to go hand in hand with a conventional treatment of the string band, e.g. in the 7th entry where, needless to add, the music accompanies the principal pair. In the preceding entry, on the other hand, warm feeling and warm sound are, for once, as harmoniously blended as they used to be in more unsophisticated (and hence more un-kitschy) times. The strings expressively punctuate Edie's (the heroine's) words, and the piano enters with a sharply defined rhythmic motif while the strings develop a sad, lyrical melody of considerable beauty. Follows one of the less incisive, but none the less sensitive structural changes of instrumentation, the piano's motif being appropriated, *pizzicato*, by the bass at a crucial dramatic juncture.

The form is as conscientious as the texture, but far more comp ex. It may sound paradoxical, but a film score has to be more thematic than a symphony—or as thematic as a symphony would have to be if you played the first movement tonight and the next tomorrow night (compare Wagner's symphonic *Leitmotiv* technique). Small-scale, temporally disconnected and ideationally interrupted, the successive entries will otherwise fall to pieces. In a primitive, pre-artistic way, Hollywood's

<sup>7</sup> 'Bernstein astonished his fellow students at Harvard by extemporizing as piano accompanist at the showings of historical films and by playing Stravinsky and Copland along with his own paraphrases of Russian folksongs to accompany *The Battleship Potemkin*'. *Op. cit.*, p. 194.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 191.



'theme songs', motto tunes and tautologizing *Leitmotivs* have always realized the need for reinsured thematic unity. The problem for the artist is how to combine manifest thematicism<sup>9</sup> with generous melodic development and insure it against monotony. Bernstein's downright Schoenbergian thorough-thematicism<sup>10</sup> comes off with flying colours. Gradenwitz<sup>11</sup> has drawn attention to the varified thematic elaboration in the *Jeremiah* Symphony and *Fancy Free*, and the *Waterfront* music extends its thematic demands down to the last ornament. There is a 'theme song', to be sure ('I wait on the waterfront'), but it is not the usual theme without variations; in fact, it does not form a structural pillar at all. Instead, various *alternativo* and ternary forms develop the initial, highly economical thematic material with the help of an extreme variation technique which may derive from the 14 variations of the first movement from the *Age of Anxiety*,<sup>12</sup> and with the intermittent support of an elaborate and un-mechanical *ostinato* technique which, unlike most Stravinskyism, honours rather than insults the master of the *ostinato*. The variation forms themselves are stratified, in that variations become themes: an ideal cinematic answer to the Schoenbergian demand for 'developing variation'.

It is fortunate that Bernstein has not heeded H. F. Redlich's somewhat unconsidered advice of three years ago:<sup>13</sup> 'The way indeed is open for him to forsake in future the narrow path of creative musicianship and henceforth to exploit his talents for conducting, piano-playing and lecturing . . . to the full'. 'There is one thing we've got in this country', says Father Barry in *On the Waterfront*, 'and that's ways of fighting back for what you think is right'. Bernstein's is a pretty solitary struggle, but the very fact that he has been offered a way of fighting back may gradually make it incumbent upon us to find another English word for *Kitsch*.

<sup>9</sup> As distinct from latent thematicism which, always demonstrable, unites the contrasting movements of every good symphony and the contrasting subjects of every good sonata. How could these contrasting entities otherwise be one?

<sup>10</sup> I have introduced this term for the German *Durchthematisierung*. The combination of 'through' and 'thorough' is fortunate.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 195 ff.

<sup>12</sup> *Cf. op. cit.*, pp. 199 f.

<sup>13</sup> *Old Musical Posers and New World Solutions*, in *The Music Review*, vol. xiii, no. 2, May, 1952, p. 158.

NOTE: When I saw *On the Waterfront* more than half a year ago (two successive sessions, the first incomplete), I had no idea that I should be asked to write the present article. It may contain minor lapses of memory which, however, would only occur in the favourable sections: I have taken great care to omit any negative criticism that may be based on faulty recollection or the illegibility of my hasty notes.

HANS KELLER

## MUSIC CRITICISM IN THE UNITED STATES

*R. F. Goldman*

That the distance between the work of art and the public to which it is presumably addressed can be lessened by the work of the critic is a proposition one is often inclined to doubt. Yet criticism has a long and moderately honourable history, and some of its practitioners, the rare ones, have made it seem a serious occupation, ranking slightly above the concoction of propaganda or the dissemination of prejudices. The serious critic, however, seldom reaches an audience any wider than that of the serious artist, and the usefulness of the critic's function may on these grounds be called altogether into question. If he depends on the sensibility which already predisposes toward perceptive appreciation, he may perform a work of supererogation, or at best may merely hasten a process that time would perform. If, on the other hand he attempts to re-define or to simplify, he often runs the danger of losing sight of his object, and its values, entirely.

Criticism, nevertheless, and as all know, can be done. It is merely difficult, and rare. Criticism is not an employment; although one hears of 'music critics', it is known that journalists are meant: journalists, and not reporters, for reporters are usually judged on their accuracy and impartiality, and if these virtues were expected of music 'critics' one could say confidently that the New Jerusalem had arrived. The jargon of radio provides the best term of description in 'commentator', for one can fairly define a 'commentator' as anyone permitted to visit inanities at stated times on readers or listeners. The inanities of commentators are always understood to be authoritative.

I am not sure that the disease of the commentator is entirely restricted to the United States, although I suspect it has not reached plague proportions in other regions. This is, I imagine, especially true of the use of the air (once considered a medium for breathing) and of the verbal lava in which the American ear is constantly engulfed. (No other nation, I trust, officially prohibits silence.) We are, I am certain, no worse off as to quality where written nonsense is concerned. Here, perhaps, the difference is purely quantitative; printing is a huge and profitable business (it is, temporarily, until the final triumph of TV, indispensable to advertising) and even the magazines published by our super-markets have columns devoted to music.

One reason for this superabundance of words, printed, spoken or muttered, is of course the passion for popular education and for the rapid acquisition of what passes as 'culture'. Culture is now a commodity, with mass-production techniques.

It is necessary to remember this in considering 'criticism', for this phenomenon daily widens the gulf between the 'highbrow' and the rest of the world, and drives serious endeavour (in every field) into a smaller and smaller area. Thus, at the moment, although the number of periodicals printed in the United States is staggering, there is no serious magazine devoted entirely to music, with the exception of *The Musical Quarterly*, and that is weighted rather heavily on the side of musicology. We have other (and very good) periodicals devoted to special interests in music: *Notes*, the journal of the Music Library Association, for example; or the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*. *The Juilliard Review* is too new to evaluate. It is evident, however, that we have since 1947 had nothing to replace the magazine *Modern Music*, which many English readers, I am sure, will remember.

*Modern Music*, an excellent magazine, ceased publication because of its continuing and increasing deficit, which could no longer be met. There is a sort of Gresham's law that applies to periodicals: serious publications depend on serious readers, *plus* the next level of readers who are at least of *good will* toward serious things. But people on this second level will invariably be seduced by an easier approach if it is offered; and since it is now invariably and persistently offered, this potential audience has been drained off. Thus the amount of financial loss involved in a serious publication has become prohibitive, and there is increasing danger that all periodicals of a serious character will be driven out of existence, unless private Foundations, like the Ford or the Rockefeller, come to the rescue.

## II

The best writing on music is done by composers; the worst by frustrated pianists, quack singing teachers and ordinary hacks who have by some mischance acquired the status of 'music critic' as a station in life. There are exceptions enough to prove this the rule: we have a few interesting writers on music who do not (at least to my knowledge) compose; and there are of course composers constitutionally incapable of evaluating any music, including their own. But our best musical writing, in the old *Modern Music*, in the Current Chronicle section of *The Musical Quarterly*, and even in the daily papers, is the work of people like Virgil Thomson, Henry Cowell, Vincent Persichetti, Arthur Berger, Jacques de Menasce, Elliott Carter and others who make music as well as think about it. Only a few of these write on music more than occasionally, and indeed except for Thomson and Berger none has been identified in a professional way with a periodical. Thomson's engagement by *The New York Herald-Tribune* was a shot in the arm not only for music criticism in the United States, but for our musical life in general. Here was someone both lively and informed, and for whom music had not stopped with Brahms, Sibelius or Franz Lehár; someone moreover who could write English with grace and sense, and whose prejudices were at least literate and musical. Thomson made *The Herald-Tribune's* music page readable and interesting; it became the one honourable exception and



example in our time. *The Herald-Tribune* has now lost both Thomson and Berger, but has made an excellent appointment in Paul Henry Lang. Lang's selection as chief critic caused some surprise among those who regarded him primarily as a musicologist, but he has shown versatility and liveliness, in addition to his unquestioned knowledge, that have made the paper's choice seem a very wise one. Lang has proved to be at home in all the aspects of the world of music, including the idioms of contemporary creation and performance. Under him, *The Herald-Tribune* has easily maintained its position as our leading daily paper so far as musical journalism is concerned.

The daily papers reach more people with 'music criticism' than the specialized journals, and it is the 'critic' of the daily paper who obviously commands the most powerful influence. It is the more deplorable therefore that so many of these 'critics' are ignorant, incompetent and illiterate. There are honourable exceptions throughout the country, such as Alfred Frankenstein of San Francisco; but by and large the music departments of our large dailies seem to be staffed by simple forms of animal life that are so useless as to encourage one in the hope that they will soon, by natural selection, become extinct. Certainly there is no profit in reading the printed matter that they eject. This matter usually lacks wit, passion, accuracy, sympathy, breadth, grace and grammar, or any other qualities becoming to men as men or men as musicians. It is useful (though no one can quite tell why) to concert managers, who by judicious quotation ('Miss Smith sang *as if she were at the bottom of a well*'; words in italics deleted) transform it into advertising. Fortunately, art can survive even this.

The system of musical journalism is itself to be blamed. To ask even qualified persons to pass rapid judgments on art and artists a dozen times a week is unjust and ridiculous. When the persons are unqualified, bored and tired, the injustice becomes even greater. One wonders how music reviewers choose their trade or are selected for it; it is obvious that they are not expected to have either the interest in music, or the information about it, that a sports writer always seems to bring to baseball or football. Our sports pages are works of art compared to our music pages; they are written by people who know what they are writing about. But many of our music reviewers are allowed to exhibit vast ignorance of music history, the taste of Adolf Schickelgruber, and the literary skill of delicatessen clerks. Most of them are delighted to evaluate new works on one hearing, without, of course, having any way of knowing whether the performances are accurate or not. Quasi-libellous statements, about both art and artists, are tolerated in daily music reviews; in almost any other department one would consider them actionable.

One knows in advance what to expect: that Mr. A. will be pontifical; Mr. B. will be patronizing; Mr. C. will be clever; Mr. D. will be nasty. Granted that the trade of music reviewing is an unpleasant one, there is still no reason why it should be as corrupting as it appears to be. There is, of course, nothing new in this, and there is certainly nothing specifically American. One can be worse off only in quantity;

the quality never changes. The generation before us, no matter how charitably recollection tries to alter things, had exactly the same. One can roll back the newspaper files and enjoy H. T. Finck (one of the *real* critics, according to anyone's father) writing about Tchaikovsky's 'adorable Fourth Symphony', or describing the Mozart G Major Piano Concerto as 'a childish and empty thing'. A small dose of Finck (who was critic of *The New York Evening Post* from 1881 to 1924) may make us feel somewhat less depressed about what is being served today. Opus 131 seemed to Finck 'woefully inferior . . . vapid stuff . . . pygmy product of a giant mind . . .' The Mozart piano concertos seemed 'as dull and trivial as music can be', and thoroughly inferior to MacDowell. Even in 1955 it is hard to outdo this, although no one can say that a lot of our journalists don't try. *Plus ça change . . . !*

### III

There are a few publications (other than *The Herald-Tribune* and other rare dailies) where people interested in music can read about music with some amount of profit and satisfaction. There are, from time to time, excellent critical pieces and essays in some of the 'little' magazines. Joseph Kerman writes regularly for *The Hudson Review*; and there are occasional articles of interest in *Perspectives*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Partisan Review*, and other quarterlies. *Notes* is not essentially a magazine of criticism, but it does review new publications, and its reviews, while seldom extended, are sometimes of notable quality. Other periodicals run reviews of performances or recordings; the latter are very mixed as to competence, and are often so concerned with the technicalities of high-fidelity as to give the impression that music is merely an excuse for some engineering practice.

The best writing we have on contemporary music (except for isolated articles here and there) is found in the Current Chronicle of *The Musical Quarterly*. The coverage is uneven and less complete than one would like, but the reviews are serious and occasionally brilliant. Many of them approach the scope of essays, and one returns to them for pleasure as well as for instruction. *The Musical Quarterly* also publishes first-rate reviews of records, by people who are more interested in music than in surface noise. In the body of the magazine there are occasional articles of a non-musicological nature: critical studies, analyses or appreciations. Paul Lang and his Associate Editor, Nathan Broder, are catholic in their choice of contributors, and it is evident that the *Quarterly* does not actively or by implication take the part of any special group or tendency so far as the contemporary scene is concerned.

The value of serious criticism cannot be seriously questioned. Perhaps Matthew Arnold's definition and defence of criticism could be re-studied for our own day. Not that such a study would in itself improve the quality of critical effort, or persuade irresponsible reviewers to consider their obligations to art or society; but it might help to remind artists, as well as the public, what criticism should and can be, and what its relation is, at its best, to creative effort.

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### *News of I.M.A.'s Abroad*

Professor Bernet Kempers of Holland has written to say that the directors of the International Cultural Centre in Amsterdam have agreed to establish an I.M.A. centre in Pavillon Vondelpark. This agreement comes in time to enable members of the I.M.A. to enjoy the privileges of this centre during the Holland Festival.

Dr. Wolfgang Steinecke has also written offering the Kranichsteiner Musik-institut in Darmstadt as an I.M.A. centre in Germany.

M. Robert Oboussier sends the following letter from Zurich:

'It seems unlikely that we shall be able to establish in Switzerland an I.M.A. like your own in South Audley Street; our towns are too small. But the Swiss League of Composers (*Association des Musiciens Suisses*) has formally agreed to place my office (*Archives centrales de Musique Suisse*) at the disposal of the I.M.A., as an information centre. We are in contact with nearly all the important institutions in Swiss musical life, and will be glad to give help whenever needed.

'In addition, M. Henri Gagnebin, the chairman of the *Concours International d'Exécution Musicale* in Geneva, has agreed to an annual exchange of concerts between the winners of the I.M.A. Award and those of the Geneva *Concours*'.

### *Juilliard Quartet*

The Juilliard Quartet will make their London début at the I.M.A. on Tuesday, November 15th, when they will play the following programme:

Roger Sessions	Quartet No. 2
Anton Webern	Five movements for String Quartet
Bela Bartók	Quartet No. 6



*Concert Award*

A few details about this Award may be of interest. It was first held in 1953, and won by Peter Stone (piano). In 1954 the Award was withheld because none of the competitors quite reached the standard required. This year two executants—Margaret Major (viola) and Patricia Carroll (piano)—tied for first place; and in no sense to establish a precedent, but rather to make up for 1954, *both* were given an Award.

In 1953, the winner gave recitals in Brussels and Amsterdam, a further recital at the Festival Hall, and a broadcast. This year, Miss Major and Miss Carroll will be enabled to give recitals in Paris and Geneva, and they will also appear at the Festival Hall. The aim of the Award is, in fact, to find young executants of outstanding ability and to give them an auspicious send-off to their careers.

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## NEWS & COMMENTS

*Adolph Deutsch* sends the following note on the economic problems of the composer in the U.S.A., and the steps that have been taken in 1954 to improve his position:

'By their very nature, composers do not take easily to group action in the form of organizations to protect their common interests. The fact that almost all composers in films, television and radio were, in their early careers, either instrumentalists or orchestrators, made membership in the American Federation of Musicians mandatory. Conducting also comes under the jurisdiction of the A.F. of M. Arranging is a borderline activity over which some regions claim control and others do not. Until the middle of 1954 the only organization of composers actually functioning in the commercial realm was The Screen Composers' Association. S.C.A., however, is limited by United States law to the field of performing rights fees, royalties, etc. As a result of their ten-year membership in S.C.A., composers have become conditioned to the idea of group action, and it is extremely gratifying to report that the formation of The Composers' Guild of America was finalized during 1954. C.G.A., with a membership of 400 or more, has started negotiations with the television networks and the producers of television shows, both live and on film. Basic minimum fees for composing and working conditions will be C.G.A.'s prime objectives. The Composers' Guild will also endeavour to negotiate terms that will enable the employee-composer to retain sufficient control over his works to allow him to assign the collection of his performance rights fees to the individual or organization of his choosing.

'While C.G.A. is getting its foothold firmly established, it will be necessary for most composers to maintain their membership in several other organizations, i.e. The Dramatist's Guild, The American Federation of Television and Radio Actors, The American Society of Music Arrangers, and The Music Director's Association of America,<sup>1</sup> but it is hoped that the dues burden upon the composers ultimately will be reduced as C.G.A. either expands its jurisdiction over these fields or makes affiliation arrangements that will lessen the dues now being paid. Even though this should be accomplished, there would still remain such bodies as The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (A.S.C.A.P.), The Songwriters' Protective Association (S.P.A.), and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. When one realizes that the practising composer could, conceivably, hold membership in a dozen or more organizations with dues ranging from \$10.00 to \$280.00 annually, it becomes apparent that the need for merging and simplification of organizational structures is almost imperative.

'While not strictly confined to the U.S.A., it seems appropriate to report upon the beginnings of international liaison between composer groups. During 1954 the writer, in his capacity of President of The Screen Composers' Association, visited and conferred with officials of composer guilds and performing rights societies in Britain, France and Switzerland. It was agreed that while there may be wide differences in the rates of compensation received by composers and a variation in the terms of employment, there were many common problems requiring solution by joint action. Arrangements were made for the interchange of information, bulletins, etc. between all of the organizations visited. The unification of world copyright laws seems, to the writer, to be a high priority objective. Protection, in the form of adequate payment to the composer for the multiple usage of his works since the advent of electronic duplication, is also urgent. Schedules of payment for re-uses have already been drawn up and will be submitted for negotiation by the newly formed Composers' Guild of America.'

<sup>1</sup> The Music Directors Association of America, Inc., was formed in October 1954 as a result of an agreement made between the Motion Pictures Producers of America and the Screen Directors' Guild. Contained in this agreement was a clause restricting the use of the term 'Directed by . . .', and all of its derivations, i.e. 'Director' . . . 'Direction' . . . etc., exclusively to the Director of the film. Several Musical Directors were, by virtue of this agreement, deprived of proper screen credit, and paid advertising. A test case is currently in the Courts, and the Counsel for the Music Directors of America, Inc., is preparing a brief to submit to the Court.



*Bulletin of the American Composers Alliance:* The Associate Editor of the A.C.A. Bulletin sends some information which may interest readers of this issue. The Bulletin came out twice in 1938, then ceased publication until February 1952, since when the following issues have appeared:

Vol. II, No. 1 (Feb. 1952)	featuring Wallingford Riegger
Vol. II, No. 2 (Jun. 1952)	featuring Roger Goeb
Vol. II, No. 3 (Oct. 1952)	featuring Alan Hovhaness
Vol. II, No. 4 (Winter 1952-53)	Salute to Leopold Stokowski
Vol. III, No. 1 (Spring 1953)	featuring Arthur Berger
Vol. III, No. 2 (Summer 1953)	featuring Elliott Carter
Vol. III, No. 3 (Autumn 1953)	featuring Otto Luening
Vol. III, No. 4 (Winter 1953-54)	featuring Henry Cowell
Vol. IV, No. 1 (August 1954)	featuring Peggy Glanville-Hicks
Vol. IV, No. 2 (November 1954)	featuring Halsey Stevens
Vol. IV, No. 3 (March 1955)	featuring Charles E. Ives
Vol. IV, No. 4 (April 1955)	featuring Robert Ward

These issues include valuable detailed lists of compositions by the composers concerned. The publication is free of charge and anyone writing to the A.C.A., 250 West Fifty-Seventh Street, N.Y.19, will be placed on the mailing list.

The *Juilliard Quartet* will be visiting Europe this summer and autumn. They play a great number of classical works, but also a repertory of contemporary chamber music which is so remarkable that it is worth giving here in detail:

\*Bartók, Six Quartets; \*Berg, Quartet Op. 3 and Lyric Suite; William Bergsma, Quartet No. 2; Elliott Carter, String Quartet; Aaron Copland, Two Pieces for String Quartet, Piano Quartet, \*Sextet with clarinet and piano; \*Irving Fine, Quartet No. 1; Lukas Foss, Quartet No. 1; \*Alexei Haieff, Quartet No. 1; Hindemith, Quartet No. 3; \*Andrew Imbrie, Quartet No. 1; Malipiero, Rispetti e Strombotti, Quartet No. 7; \*Peter Mennin, Quartet No. 2; Walter Piston, Quartet No. 1; Wallingford Riegger, Quartet No. 1, Op. 30; Artur Schnabel, Quartets Nos. 1 and 5; \*Schoenberg, Four String Quartets, Ode to Napoleon (with piano and narrator); William Schuman, Quartets Nos. 2, 3, and \*4; Roger Sessions, Quartets Nos. 1 and 2; Harold Shapero, Quartet No. 1; Ralph Shapey, Quartet No. 2; Shostakovich, Piano Quintet; Michael Tippett, Quartet No. 2; Fartein Valen, Quartet No. 1, Op. 10; Bernard Wagenaar, Quartet No. 2; Anton Webern, \*Five movements for String Quartet Op. 5, Bagatelles.

In celebration of its seventy-fifth jubilee during the 1955/56 season, the *Boston Symphony Orchestra* has commissioned the following composers to write orchestral works of 20 to 30 minutes' duration: Samuel Barber, Leonard Bernstein, Benjamin Britten, Aaron Copland, Henri Dutilleux, Gottfried von Einem, Howard Hanson, Jacques Ibert, Bohuslav Martinu, Goffredo Petrassi, Walter Piston, William Schuman, Roger Sessions, and Heitor Villa-Lobos

According to present information, American works to be performed in London next season will include the following:

Elliott Carter, String Quartet; Aaron Copland, Variations for piano; Henry Cowell, piano pieces; Charles Ives, songs; Wallingford Riegger, Dichotomy; Carl Ruggles, Four Evocations for piano; Roger Sessions, String Quartet No. 2.

Most of these works will be heard in the series of concerts to be given by the I.C.A. (British Section of the I.S.C.M.)

• Recorded for *Columbia Masterworks Records*.

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

- HENRY DIXON COWELL:** Born 1897 in California. One of the most famous of American composers, and has taught many of the younger generation in America. On June 7th this year gave a talk in London for the British section of the I.S.C.M. on *International Elements in American Music*. Has written, with his wife, an outstanding book on Charles Ives which has just been published by O.U.P.
- SIDNEY ROBERTSON COWELL:** Wife of Henry Cowell. Is a well-known authority on American folk music. Part of her article in this issue has been reprinted from her notes written for an L.P. recording of Hymns, Anthems and Fuguing Songs, published by *Folkways Records*.
- LOU HARRISON:** Composer and critic. Born in Portland, Oregon, 1917. Studied with Schoenberg and Henry Cowell. His *Scene* from William Morris won a prize at the Rome Festival, 1954. The article on Carl Ruggles is reprinted here by permission of the author and of Oscar Baradinsky.
- ELLIOTT CARTER:** Composer and critic. Born 1908 in New York. Studied under Walter Piston at Harvard, and from 1932-35 with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. His *Sonata for 'Cello and Piano* has been chosen for performance at this year's I.S.C.M. Festival at Baden-Baden, and the Juilliard Quartet will perform his *String Quartet* on several occasions during their visit to Europe this summer and autumn.
- ROBERT EVETT:** Composer, primarily of chamber music; and critic. Studied with Roy Harris and Vincent Persichetti. His criticism has appeared in *The Kenyon Review*, the *Juilliard Review* and *Notes*, among other periodicals. Is book editor of *The New Republic*.
- ARTHUR BERGER:** Critic and composer. Born 1912 in New York. Studied, like Elliott Carter, with Walter Piston and Nadia Boulanger; then later with Milhaud. Compositions include *Ideas of Order*, commissioned by Mitropoulos for the New York Philharmonic-Symphony and later played by the Boston Symphony under Munch, as well as works for various chamber combinations. Is now working on an orchestral work commissioned by the Louisville Symphony. His book on Aaron Copland (1950) has been published by O.U.P. Is at present Associate Professor and Chairman of Graduate Studies in Music at Brandeis University, Massachusetts.
- MILTON BABBITT:** Composer and critic. Born 1916 in Philadelphia. Studied with Roger Sessions, Marion Bauer and Philip James. Teaches composition at Princeton University, where he also taught mathematics for a short period. In 1951-52 was President of the U.S. section of I.S.C.M. and was represented at the 1953 Oslo Festival by his song-cycle *Du*. His compositions have been performed outside America in France, Italy and Switzerland.
- VIRGIL THOMSON:** Composer and critic. Born 1896 in Kansas City, Missouri. His best-known work is the opera *Four Saints in Three Acts* with text by Gertrude Stein. Was music critic of the *New York Herald Tribune* 1940-54; and a large number of his best articles have been published in three books—*The Musical Scene* (1945), *The Art of Judging Music* (1948) and *Music Right and Left* (1951). His contribution to this issue, *The Abstract Composers*, first appeared in the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1952 and is reprinted by permission of both author and publisher.
- JOHN CAGE:** Composer and pianist. Born 1912 in California. Studied with Schoenberg, Adolph Weiss and Henry Cowell. Will be visiting England and Europe on tour in the spring of 1956. His *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano have been recorded by *Dial*.
- WILFRID MELLERS:** Composer, author, critic and lecturer. Born 1914. Now Staff Tutor in Music, Extra Mural Department, Birmingham University. Compositions include two operas, *Christopher Marlowe* and *The Shepherd's Daughter*, a cantata *Yggdrasil*, a symphony, and (work in progress) *Auguries of Innocence*, for counter-tenor, gamba and harpsichord. Books include *François Couperin and the French Classical Tradition*, and *Music and Society*.
- DAVID DREW:** Born 1930 in London. Educated at Harrow and Peterhouse, Cambridge. Contributed to the December issue of *The Score* the first part of a substantial study on Messiaen, to be completed in September. Is at present editing a book on opera for Decca.
- HANS KELLER:** Born 1919. Author of *The Need for Competent Film Music Criticism* (British Film Institute, 1947) and of the article on British Film Music in the new *Grove*. Specializes in the psychology of musical composition. Was joint editor of *Music Survey* and of the *Benjamin Britten* symposium (London, 1952) and is now writing a book entitled *Criticism: A Musician's Manifesto*, which will be published by André Deutsch.
- RICHARD GOLDMAN:** Composer, bandmaster and critic. Born 1911 in New York. His band works have been played all over the United States. Has written several books, and is editor of the recently founded *Juilliard Review*. His criticisms of contemporary music in the *Musical Quarterly* are of outstanding interest.



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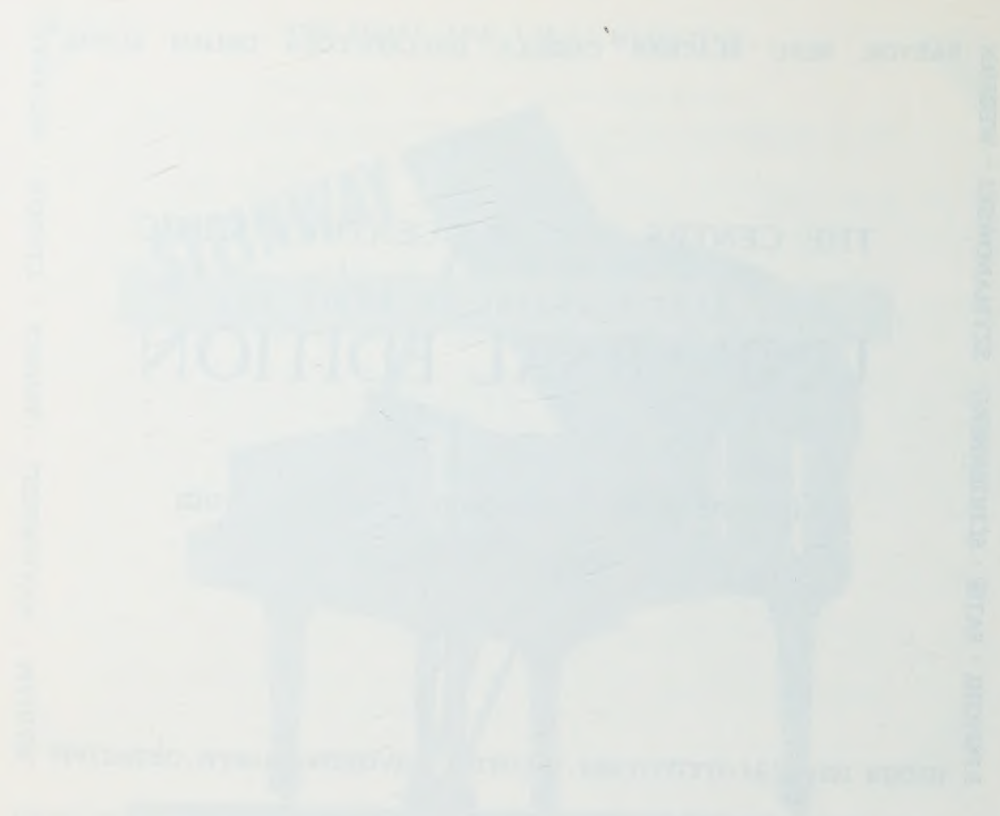
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